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# "Goodbye, Mamma. I'm Off to Yokohama": The Office of War Information and Tin Pan Alley in World War II.

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**"GOODBYE, MAMMA. I'M OFF TO YOKOHAMA":  
THE OFFICE OF WAR INFORMATION AND TIN PAN ALLEY IN WORLD  
WAR II  
Volume I**

**A Dissertation**

**Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the  
Louisiana State University and  
Agricultural and Mechanical College  
in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy**

**in**

**The Department of History**

**by**

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## PREFACE

The quest for the Great American War Song of World War II occupied the American music industry for most of the war years, 7 December 1941-14 August, 1945. But, to the amazement of the United States government's Office of War Information and the music industry, the most talented, successful professional songwriters of the era could not create a martial tune that had a lasting impact on the American public. Prior to World War II there had always been a song or songs readily identifiable with past conflicts. From the Revolutionary War came "Yankee Doodle," while "Hail, Columbia" was a product of the undeclared naval war of 1798-1799 between France and the United States. The War of 1812 gave the country the "Star Spangled Banner," and the Civil War produced a host of songs: "Battle Cry of Freedom," "Battle Hymn of the Republic," "Dixie," (written in 1859), "Maryland, My Maryland," "Marching Through Georgia," "Tenting Tonight on the Old Camp Ground," "Tramp, Tramp, Tramp the Boys Are Marching," and "When Johnny Comes Marching Home." The Spanish-American War generated "Strike Up the Band, Here Comes a Sailor," "Break the News to Mother," and "There'll Be a Hot Time in the Old Town Tonight." From World War I Americans sang "It's a Long Way to Tipperary," "There's a Long, Long Trail a Winding," "Mademoiselle

from Armentieres," "Till We Meet Again," and especially "Over There."

This study will examine the search for a war song that would rally Americans in the same way that songs from previous wars had done by examining the two foremost music business publications of the years 1941-1945, Variety, published in New York City and The Billboard, published in Cincinnati, Ohio, and documents from the Office of War Information found in Record Group 208, in the National Archives' Washington National Records Center, Suitland, Maryland. There are various sub-groups of Record Group 208 that pertain to this topic: Sub-Group 118, "Surveys of Public Attitudes"; Sub-Group 169, "Records of the Deputy Chief, Domestic Radio Bureau, New York, Dec. 1942-Dec. 1945," "Records of the American Theater Wing's Music War Committee"; and Sub-Group 170, "Records of the Deputy Chief of the Domestic Radio Bureau, Dec. 1942-July 1945." Also valuable are the materials in Sub-Group 572 "Records of the Radio Division, 1942-1945." Unfortunately many of these records are in disarray. Over the years they have been shuffled around within the National Archives's complex of buildings and are now located at the Washington National Record Center in Suitland, Maryland. Many record folders are empty or minus some of their cataloged contents. In some cases, entire groups of record boxes

are missing. However, a vast collection of popular music of the World War II years is located in the sound recording and sheet music collections of the Performing Arts (Music) Reading Room of the Music and Recorded Sound Division of the Library of Congress. These sources, along with various secondary works, will be used to describe the unsuccessful search for a best-selling war song by the Office of War Information and Tin Pan Alley<sup>1</sup> writers alike during the Second World War. The study will include the following chapters:

CHAPTER 1: "WHAT THIS COUNTRY NEEDS IS A GOOD FIVE CENT WAR SONG!" BECAUSE "THERE'S NARY AN 'OVER THERE' IN THE LOT."

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<sup>1</sup>Tin Pan Alley is a symbol of a closely-knit group of publishers, songwriters, songpluggers, and record companies engaged in the popular music business and also a specific place. Monroe H. Rosenfeld, a journalist, used the name to describe the area in New York City between 5th Avenue and Broadway on 29th Street--the locale of the main music publishers at the turn of the century. The sound of many pianos being played at the same time made him think of tin pans being struck simultaneously. Tin Pan Alley moved uptown in the 1930s to Broadway between 42nd and 49th Streets. The Brill Building, housing as many as one hundred music publishers, became the center of Tin Pan Alley and remained so until the 1960s, when various publishers began to disperse across the city. There were also branches of Tin Pan Alley in Chicago and Los Angeles. Arnold Shaw, compiler, Dictionary of American Pop/Rock, (New York: Schirmer, 1982), 386-387.

This chapter introduces the topic, sets the context for the popular songs that emerged during those years, and details the rush to write the Great American War Song. It also examines the attempt of Tin Pan Alley to capture the American public's imagination with a martial song while the most popular songs continued to be romantic ballads, escapist tunes, or novelty songs.

## CHAPTER 2: "NO MORE TUNE THAN THE YEARNFUL BELLOWINGS OF A LONELY . . . ROMANTIC COW"

This chapter focuses on the role of the National Wartime Music Committee, an advisory group of the Domestic Radio Bureau of the Office of War Information, composed of representatives from all branches of the federal government that had any necessity to use music in carrying out their assigned war duties. This chapter spells out the Office of War Information's efforts, through the Domestic Radio Bureau, to outline "proper" war songs, along with tips on how and what to write aimed at Tin Pan Alley composers. Simultaneously, the music business formed its own Music War Committee to promote war songs both in New York and Hollywood. Neither group succeeded. The chapter also discusses anti-war songs of the Almanac Singers, the impact of "swing" music, the American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers's influence on the music business, the effect changing technology had on

popular music and compares war songs of the First World War with those of the Second.

### CHAPTER 3: "FROM CANTATA TO OUTRIGHT CORN": THE CONTINUING SEARCH FOR A "PROPER" WAR SONG

The Office of War Information's National Wartime Music Committee disbanded in failure while Tin Pan Alley members argued among themselves. Songwriters said they were writing war songs, but publishers would not print them. Publishers claimed the war songs they received were poor in quality and few in number. Both publishers and writers attacked band leaders for failing to play war songs, and band leaders asserted that the public wanted dance tunes and not war songs. Tin Pan Alley formed its own Music War Committee to encourage war songs, but the general thought was that World War II was so grim that there was not much to sing about. The most popular songs continue to be romantic ballads, lively dance tunes, or novelty songs.

### CHAPTER 4: "TAKE A TIP FROM SOOZIE CUE--SHE KNOWS WHAT'S HOT AND WHAT'S NOT."

This chapter concludes by discussing the reasons why no martial war song became a best selling hit. Americans did not need



a war song to convince them to support the war. The governments' fears of faltering morale did not materialize. The crusade for a "proper" war song was misguided from the beginning. A crucial factor was that the music business made huge profits during World War II selling sentimental ballads and love songs. Despite paper shortages, shellac rationing, strikes called by both the American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers and the American Federation of Musicians, the difficulty of travel for performers due to gasoline and tire rationing, and eventually a loss of musicians to the draft, music and related entertainment businesses prospered. In order to maintain this high level of income, publishers and recording companies catered to the main consumers of music, teenage girls. These newly empowered members of American society came to be the dominant factor in selecting the the types of songs that made huge profits for music publishers and record manufacturers, as well as popular music's composers, authors, and performers.

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## ABSTRACT

The quest for the Great American War Song of World War II occupied the American music industry for most of the war years. But, to the amazement of the United States government's Office of War Information and the music industry, the songwriters of the era could not create a martial tune that had a lasting impact on the American public. Prior to World War II there had always been a song or songs readily identifiable with past conflicts.

Following Pearl Harbor, Tin Pan Alley rushed to write the Great American War Song; however, to the bemusement of the music industry, the most popular songs continued to be romantic ballads, escapist tunes, or novelty songs. To remedy the situation, the federal government created the National Wartime Music Committee, an advisory group of the Domestic Radio Bureau of the Office of War Information, which outlined "proper" war songs, along with tips on how and what to write aimed at Tin Pan Alley composers. Simultaneously, the music business formed its own Music War Committee to promote war songs. Neither group succeeded. There were also numerous other influences on war song composition: the impact of "swing" music, the American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers's strike, the effect of changing technology,

and comparisons with war songs from the First World War. The general thought was that World War II was so grim that there was not much to sing about. The most popular songs continue to be romantic ballads.

This study concludes that Americans did not need a war song to convince them to support the war. The governments' fears of faltering morale did not materialize. The crusade for a "proper" war song was misguided from the beginning. A crucial factor was that the music business made huge profits during World War II selling sentimental ballads and love songs. To maintain this high level of income, publishers and recording companies catered to the main consumers of music, teenage girls, who had become the dominant factor in selecting the types of songs that made huge profits for the music industry.

## CHAPTER 1

**"WHAT THIS COUNTRY NEEDS IS A GOOD FIVE CENT WAR SONG!"  
BECAUSE "THERE'S NARY AN 'OVER THERE' IN THE LOT"**

World War II had an enormous effect on all aspects of American society: political, economic, and social. The United States was transformed from a nation crippled by economic depression, divided by class, and facing a crisis of confidence, into a prosperous society, united in purpose, beginning to show limited tolerance for the diversity of its population. The war affected nearly every man, woman, and child in the United States. While young men, and later women, were overseas or stationed at training camps throughout the country, children and adolescents on "the home front" were encouraged to do their part by collecting scrap material and buying war stamps. Older people took civil defense jobs, served on selective service boards, and bought and sold war bonds. Men who stayed on the homefront were joined by millions of women and older adolescents working to produce war materials and provide the services needed to run the country. World War II was the last time the United States was totally committed to a communal goal--the defeat of the Axis powers. However, there existed a dark side of the war at home: black markets, race prejudice, war profiteers, and organized crime divided Americans along political, economic,

and social lines. But most of the time these divisions were overshadowed by the intense patriotism that swept the country following the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. A notable exception was the reinforcement of social division by the forced interment of Japanese-Americans in relocation camps throughout the country. A large part of this patriotic fervor was fed by the entertainment industry. Two of the strongest branches of show business, radio and motion pictures, played a central part in marshalling public sentiment for the war effort. The U.S. Treasury Department sponsored radio shows to stimulate the sale of war bonds. Other programs incorporated public service messages concerning the war effort into their scripts. Motion pictures sought to inspire as well as entertain Americans. The one element common to all these forms of entertainment during World War II was music--and the music that had the widest audience was popular music. The role popular music ought to play in maintaining morale and boosting patriotism sparked heated debates as the industry entertained conflicting views about popular music's function as a propaganda tool.

How is popular music defined? Popular music is that music which seeks to appeal to the widest possible audience. It is initially written, then published, finally performed, and possibly recorded. David Hatch and Stephen Millward, in From Blues to Rock:

An Analytical History of Pop Music, maintain that popular music, by virtue its of creation in written form before performance, is akin to the art song of classical music. This is in contrast to a second kind of "pop" music which is more closely related to jazz in that it is primarily improvised by musicians and passed on to others who learn the music through hearing it performed or from recordings.<sup>1</sup>

A "pop" musician does not have to be a musical literate, whereas a popular musician, by definition, must be. The opposite positions are taken by the audiences of popular and "pop" music. The "pop" music audience needs to be better educated in the form, style, and substance of jazz-oriented "pop" music in order to more fully appreciate the improvisational character of the music. Popular music audiences, on the other hand, need no prior knowledge or special understanding to be able to enjoy the music. Popular music can be well-liked across a diverse audience. Other cultural historians insist that popular music connotes a "rhythmic idiom" contained in vocal songs, instrumental tunes, or novelty pieces which reflect the musical preferences of the majority of society. This definition of popular music places the genre at the mercy of

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<sup>1</sup>David Hatch and Stephen Millward, From Blues to Rock: An Analytical History of Pop Music, (Manchester, England: Manchester University Press, 1987), 1.

the general public as a reflector of common taste--however degraded or refined that taste might be. Another description of popular music insists that popular songs are "diluted, sweetened, sentimentalized and trivialized . . . the product of white songwriters for predominantly white audiences tending towards wishful thinking, dreams and ineffectual nostalgia, realistic fantasy, self-pity and sentimental cliches masquerading as emotion."<sup>2</sup>

By the 1940s popular music could also be defined by the number of recordings or sheet music copies a song sold or the number of times a tune was played on the largest broadcasting networks in a specified period of time (usually a week). At the beginning of World War II a "smash" hit song might sell 200,000 copies of sheet music and 100,000 records. By the end of the war sheet music sales of 1,000,000 copies of sheet music or more were not uncommon and record sales of 250-500,000 marked a song as a best seller. Any song with large sales was automatically listed on

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<sup>2</sup>S.I. Hayakawa, "Popular Songs vs. The Facts of Life," in Bernard Rosenberg and David Manning White, eds., Mass Culture: The Popular Arts in America (New York: Free Press, 1957), 393.



the top ten music charts and would receive an average of 40 plays per week on the major networks.<sup>3</sup>

Popular music is most often associated with some form of social activity such as dances, parties, or social gatherings where a sense of community and shared emotions are important. Richard Mabry says that popular music "acts as [a] binding force on the group, [in which] the observed responses of the other members are a way of clarifying your own."<sup>4</sup> Another view of the term "popular" comes from Ray Browne of the Center for the Study of Popular Culture. Browne argues that "popular" is comprised of "all those elements of life which are not narrowly intellectual or creatively elitist and which are generally though not necessarily disseminated

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<sup>3</sup>See "10 Best Sellers on Coin Machines" and "15 Best Sheet Music Sellers," published weekly in Variety, (New York: Variety, 1941-1945) and "Music Popularity Chart: Songs with Most Radio Plugs; National and Regional Best Selling Records; National and Regional Sheet Music Best Sellers; and Leading Music Machine Records," published weekly in The Billboard, (Cincinnati, OH: The Billboard, 1941-1945).

<sup>4</sup>Richard Mabry, The Pop Process, (London: Hutchinson Educational Ltd., 1969), 41.

through the mass media."<sup>5</sup> It follows that popular music is a composite of musical tastes that consolidate or merge their certain similarities at a given time. There are variables of age, sex, race, class, and education that affect the public's reception of popular music, but the most important variable in defining popular music is the fact that people select what they like to hear. If enough people like the same songs and purchase recordings or sheet music of these tunes in sufficient quantities, then the music is said to be "popular."

For the purposes of this study, "popular music" will refer to the specific music associated with Tin Pan Alley, the sheet music publishing business, and the recording industry during the years encompassing the United States' involvement in World War II (1941-1945). This music was written by accomplished musicians for a musically informed public. This does not mean that every person who listened to popular music read and understood printed music; rather it means that the popular music audience was well-versed (through hours of listening) in the musical form, style, and lyric content of the songs.

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<sup>5</sup>Ray Browne, "Popular Culture: Notes Toward a Definition," in Browne and Ronald Ambrosetti, eds., Popular Culture and Curricular, (Bowling Green, Ohio: Bowling Green State University Popular Press, 1970), 11.

This study will look at the enormous outpouring of popular songs from Tin Pan Alley during the war years and at the efforts of the Office of War Information to guide popular songwriters in the direction the OWI thought was needed to assure the American public's morale did not falter for lack of a "proper" war song. None of these new songs, however, rallied the American public and the fighting man in the same way that George M. Cohan's "Over There" had sparked the imagination and spirit of the country during World War I. What factors contributed to this lack of a dominant "war song"? What was done to promote the writing of such a song, and how did the United States government attempt to give guidance and direction to composers during the Second World War? Was it even possible for such a song to gain wide popularity in the 1940s? Was American society now so sophisticated that it disdained the use of militant songs to get the public to do the jobs necessary to win the war? Was there some other form of popular entertainment available that filled the function of a war song? Or did some other factor, such as the introduction of a new form of popular entertainment, explain America's failed search for an inspiring war song?

Was popular music relevant to the daily headlines and to the life of a nation at war? Were the kinds of songs people should hear

and the role that popular music should play in wartime subjects of debate throughout the war? What should be the influence of popular music in a nation at war? Should it become an unofficial arm of the government to be used for propaganda and "education"? The debate about popular music's role began almost as soon as World War II did.

By December 1941, popular music was a highly profitable, widespread part of American culture, featuring well-known musicians, band leaders, singers, and songwriters, whose efforts would be heard by millions of radio and juke box listeners during the war and watched on stage by adoring fans across the nation. The United States government, through the Office of War Information, was quick to realize that here was a reservoir of talent and competence capable of influencing peoples' feelings and opinions. And popular music might be capable of even greater influence during wartime than before, because for the first time in a generation people had money to spend on entertainment.

The debate about the value of entertainment in a war culture often became hot and bitter. Congress especially seemed subject to polemics and rhetoric during the first year of the war. Recreation is essential, said President Roosevelt. How essential, asked Congress? Should musicians, entertainers, and technical

crews be exempt from the draft?<sup>6</sup> Some congressmen were unhappy with that they perceived as preferential treatment for members of the entertainment industry. The head of Selective Service, Brigadier General Lewis B. Hershey, at first sanctioned draft deferments for actors, musicians, writers, directors, producers, sound engineers, cameramen, and other technical jobs related to show business. This move infuriated members of the House of Representatives who had been attempting to gain deferments for men whose vocations the congressmen considered significantly more essential to the war effort. For example, Representative August H. Anderson of Minnesota demanded to know why his request for farmers' deferments had been waiting unsigned

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<sup>6</sup>"Army Rules Out Double Hitches for Orks, Acts," The Billboard, 22 Aug. 1942, vol. 54, no. 34: 20. "'Show Must Go on,'" Says La Guardia: Amusement Industry Essential in Successful Operation of Defense Plan," The Billboard, 27 Dec. 1941, vol. 53, no. 52: 6. "Show Biz Takes Stock of Itself; Afraid Will Lose Much Manpower to War," and "Gov't Seizes H'Wood Arms," Variety, 10 Dec. 1941, vol. 145, no. 1: 3; In November 1942, the Office of War Information asked Selective Service deferments for Edgar Bergen, Red Skelton, Bob Hope, Nelson Eddy, Freeman Gosden (Amos of Amos 'n Andy ), Lanny Ross, Harold Peary (the Great Gildersleeve), and Kay Kyser. Only Bergen received a deferment; the rest were rejected by the military for medical reasons. "OWI Asked Deferring of 7 Radio Figures," New York Times, 11 Mar. 1943: 22.

on General Hershey's desk for six months.<sup>7</sup> Another criticism was leveled at Selective Service by Congressman Clevenger of Ohio when he asked, "May not sugar, milk, canned fruit, and vegetables, meats, and grain be more essential than a lot of this salacious bedroom drama, low comedy, and propaganda so generously interlarded into legitimate entertainment?"<sup>8</sup> But the most galling abuses, according to some in Congress, was the addition of wealthy entertainers to the federal payroll. Representative John Taber of New York called them parasites, pointing to actor Melvin Douglas's \$8,000 salary as a member of the office of Civilian Defense. Representative Charles Fabbis of Pennsylvania joined Representative Taber's criticism of extravagant salaries offered show business people. On February 6, 1942, Fabbis summed up the attitudes of many on Capitol Hill when he said that the \$8,000 salary for Douglas would be as much "as we are paying that matchless and heroic soldier, General Douglas MacArthur when he is battling in the forests of the Philippines everyday, every hour--yes, even every minute--in danger of his life to preserve the fate

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<sup>7</sup>Representative August H. Anderson, in the Congressional Record, vol. 88, pt. 1 , (9 February 1942), 1143.

<sup>8</sup>Representative Clevenger, in the Congressional Record, vol. 88, pt. 1 (February 16, 1942), 1266.

of the white race in the Orient."<sup>9</sup> Evidently, entertainers were not thought to be essential to the war effort by Congress because after all of the rhetoric ended, the Deficiency Appropriations Bill passed February 9, 1942, by a margin of two to one. This bill was crucial to the future role of the music industry's war efforts because an amendment to the bill refused to allow the Office of Civilian Defense to use any of its funds to "promote, produce, or carry on instruction in physical fitness by dancers, fan dancing, street shows, theatrical performances, or other public entertainments." In other words, if show business wished to contribute to the war effort, it would have to pay its own way, and there would be no special privileges for actors, musicians, or other professions of the entertainment industry. It would not take long for show business to invest itself with the "morale factor" and thus counteract this negative assessment placed on it so early in the war.

There were still questions concerning the role of music in wartime. Among the most pressing were: might popular music be

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<sup>9</sup>Representative Charles Fabbis, in the Congressional Record, vol. 88, pt. 1 (February 6, 1942), 1097.

of sustaining value to the war effort?<sup>10</sup> What were the "right types" of war songs and who could be trusted to write them? Should the United States government be a part of the "creative" process of composition?<sup>11</sup> These were just a few of the questions facing the popular music business at the beginning of World War II, and they continued to haunt Tin Pan Alley until August 1945.

Some leading music educators saw a potential in popular music for patriotic excitement and for public instruction, and so they called for the conscious development of patriotic, educational music. Edwin Hughes, president of the National Music Council, addressed the National Music Teachers' Association and the American Musicological Society, meeting in Minneapolis, Minnesota, in December 1941, with these words:

Music in America faces difficult and even perilous times. It also faces an extraordinary opportunity to perform a vital function in the nation's hour of need--to sustain public morale and to bear its full share of

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<sup>10</sup>J.E. Broyles, "Commercial Phonographs Build Morale," The Billboard, 13 Dec. 1941, vol. 53, no. 50: 64.

<sup>11</sup>"Gov't" Help for War Songs: To Encourage Fighting Tunes," Variety, 26 Aug. 1942, vol. 147, no. 12: 3. "Too Few War Tunes," Variety, 25 Mar 1942, vol. 146, no. 3: 3.



responsibility in upholding and strengthening the culture of democracy.<sup>12</sup>

Tin Pan Alley composers, publishers, authors, and music-business related trade papers quickly took up the debate. Variety demanded that American publishers "Sift English War Songs for America Now," and questioned "Show Biz's Role in the War." In "Paeans in Praise of America," Variety compared the strength and morale boosting power of popular music in America's wars from the Revolutionary War to the musical output in the first month of World War II and found the latter wanting. Publishers demanded: "Where Are the War Songs?" and lamented that there were "Too Few Good War Tunes." Tin Pan Alley proposed that the "First Steps [Be] Taken for Fighting Songs." The Billboard's headlines echoed Variety's: "Old Timers Doom New War Songs," "Droopy War Ballads Out--In Theory," "All Out for Uncle Sam: Demand for Patriotic Records Soars," and "Tin Pan Alley Fires Song Salvo at Axis."

On the other hand, publishers stayed away from war songs, claiming the public's interest was in romantic or novelty songs, not battle hymns. Escapism seemed to be a high priority with music listeners, and the composers of Tin Pan Alley struggled to write a

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<sup>12</sup>John K. Sherman, "Music's Role in War Theme at Meeting of Teachers," Musical America, 10 Jan. 1942, vol. LXII, no.1: 1.

war song that would appeal to both civilians and the armed forces.<sup>13</sup>

Aside from the headlines, three main questions dominated the popular music debate:

- 1) Did listeners want only escape?
- 2) Would the public accept war songs?
- 3) When would the big hit war song appear?

A 1942 straw vote of film editors in forty United States cities said: More comedies, fewer serious dramas, and fewer war pictures were wanted for 1943.<sup>14</sup> Did the same mood prevail in the field of popular music? Was the talk in Congress and the entertainment press just that, talk? Did Tin Pan Alley and Hollywood truly attempt to turn out war songs that would sell? Did the American public clamor for war songs and support the songwriters by purchasing the music and the recordings of war songs? Did Americans agree with Representative J. Parnell Thomas of New Jersey when he said, "What America needs today is a good

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<sup>13</sup>"Not Singing About This War," Variety, 15 April 1942, vol. 146, no. 6: 1. "Isham Jones on Why War Songs Flop," Variety, vol. 147, no. 1: 43. "Public Seems Blah to 'Wrath' Songs, Pubs See OWI Hopes Scuttled by Facts," Variety, 14 Oct. 1942, vol. 148, no. 6: 42.

<sup>14</sup>"More Comedy, Less Drama," Variety, 20 May 1942, vol. 146, no. 11: 2.

five cent war song. The nation is literally crying for a good, peppy marching song, something with plenty of zip, ginger, fire, something like 'Over There,' 'Keep the Home Fires Burning,' 'Pack Up Your Troubles' and some of those good old songs of World War I."<sup>15</sup>

Or was the nation lukewarm to the old-fashioned, rousing, marching song, patterned after "Over There"? Or was the search for the Great American War Song fundamentally flawed from the beginning since it rested on the belief that what had worked in World War I would still work in World War II? Was the hunt for a war song an illustration of the struggle between private enterprise and the federal government trying to define their roles in the war? Both the government and Tin Pan Alley seemed to believe that the Great American War Song was vital to the war effort as will be shown by the amount of time spent on this matter which, in the final analysis, was of little or no consequence in the outcome of the war. One Navy LCVP, an open, ramped landing craft, a "Higgins boat," built by Andrew Jackson Higgins's shipyard in New Orleans, did more to win the war than any song, but the government was convinced a war song was a necessity. This insistence on a war song was one small detail indicative of the way in which the

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<sup>15</sup>"Says We Need 5 Ct. Song," New York Times, 29 Jan. 1942: 21.

government defined World War II for the American people. It was spelled out for the public as "total" war. This meant that the government needed Americans to realize the all-encompassing nature of the conflict and the potential threat to every facet of American life posed by the war: a victorious Axis meant, at best, an uncertain future for the United States and, at worst, the end of a free, independent, democratic country. The search for the Great American War Song was a distillation of the problems faced by American society during the war: How did society balance public versus private obligation in a democracy? What constituted a war song? To the government and Americans of the World War I generation, a war song had to be in march tempo and the lyrics must give voice to America's military might and the righteousness of her cause. During World War II, civilians and soldiers put their own blueprints on war songs which were far different from those Americans sang in previous wars. These questions faced a popular music business that was still reeling, along with the rest of the nation, from the shock of the surprise attack by Japan on Pearl Harbor, Hawaii.

Earlier that fall and winter of 1941, when America's war against Japan had not yet begun, the threat of war had been overshadowed by preparations for the holiday season. Newspapers,

on that first Sunday in December 1941, carried the usual pre-holiday stories and advertisements. The New York Times filled dozens of pages with gift suggestions. W & J Sloan invited shoppers to visit their "Gay Main Floor" for Christmas presents that ranged from crystal seahorse bookends at \$3.95 a pair to a \$160.00 coffee table made from a drum used in the War of 1812.<sup>16</sup> The Davega Music Company reminded shoppers of the big sale on Emerson "Miracle Tone" table radios at \$34.95.<sup>17</sup> Liberty Music Shop extolled the Deluxe Capehart radio-phonograph as "a time-proved record-changer that turns the record for listeners." It played twenty records (forty selections) on both sides, providing three hours of uninterrupted music. Prices started at \$595.00.<sup>18</sup>

Front pages all across America on that Sunday reported trouble in the Pacific as well as news of the war already underway in Europe and Asia. The New York Times carried the banner headlines: "Roosevelt Appeals to Hirohito After New Threat in Indo-China;

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<sup>16</sup>"W & J Sloan," advertisement, New York Times 7 Dec. 1941, sec. 1: 76.

<sup>17</sup>"Davega Sale," advertisement, New York Times 7 Dec. 1941, sec.1: 48.

<sup>18</sup>"For Christmas a Libertyphone," advertisement, New York Times 7 Dec. 1941, sec. 1: 25.

Germans Trapped at Taganrog." The equally ominous subheading followed: "Direct Appeal to Tokyo Not to Precipitate a Conflict Is Made by President."<sup>19</sup> On the front page, Secretary of the Navy Knox assured Americans that their "Navy Is Superior to Any." The *gravure* section led off with the photo feature: "Hawaii--Spearhead of Pacific Defense," emphasizing swimming and surfing at Waikiki in the shadow of U.S. Navy maneuvers.

December 7, 1941, began for most Americans as another early winter Sunday morning. Radio programs on the major networks for Sunday afternoon offered a wide choice for the listener: popular music (Sammy Kaye's Sunday Serenade); drama (Great Play's version of Inspector General); symphonic music (the New York Philharmonic with guest pianist Arthur Rubenstein); pro-football (Brooklyn Dodgers vs. New York Giants); and current events (Wake Up America's panel discussion on "Can There Be a Substantial Reduction in Nondefense Expenditures of the Federal Government?"). And in a twist of irony that would not go unnoticed at the time, on their 5:00 P.M. show the Moylan Sisters planned to sing a favorite

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<sup>19</sup>"Roosevelt Appeals to Hirohito," New York Times 7 Dec. 1941, sec.1: 1.

tune."The End of a Perfect Day."<sup>20</sup> Most Americans were going about their usual Sunday routines.

At mid-day, however, radio listeners were jolted by a report over the Mutual Radio Network : "THE JAPANESE HAVE ATTACKED PEARL HARBOR, HAWAII, BY AIR, President Roosevelt has just announced." WOR's staff announcer, Len Sterling, cut into the network's play-by-play account of the Dodger-Giant contest at New York's Polo Grounds, to read the news from a United Press bulletin. He glanced at the studio clock. The hands showed 2:26 P.M. Minutes later, CBS and NBC networks sped the news to a stunned America. At CBS, newscaster John Daly told of the Pacific air attack. At NBC, newswriter Robert Eisenbach seized the teletype sheet, rushed into the studio, and read the bulletin without waiting for a staff announcer.<sup>21</sup>

Within minutes of learning of the attack, radio converted to emergency status, offering air time and communications assistance

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<sup>20</sup>Thomas A. DeLong, The Mighty Music Box (New York: Hastings House Publishers, 1980), 240-241. Radio Broadcast News, (East Pittsburgh, PA: Westinghouse Electric & Manufacturing Co.) 7 Dec. 1941. This publication lists the daily/weekly program schedules for the major radio networks in Pittsburgh, New York, and the East, Chicago and the Midwest, and the South.

<sup>21</sup>DeLong, 241.

to President Roosevelt. To speed news to listeners around the clock, radio networks quickly rearranged schedules to give war-related news bulletins priority over all programming. Appeals were broadcast to military personnel and civilian plane-spotters to report back to their units. Armed forces recruiting messages dominated the air much of the day. Newscasters and commentators, beginning on that Sunday afternoon, dealt chiefly with the war effort. Music on radio also began to march to a different drummer. Before December 7, it had chiefly provided entertainment. Now it added a new beat: morale boosting on the battlefield and on the homefront.

Morale is an term which allows a wide range of interpretation as to its meaning. In the broadest sense, morale may mean that people must be "kept happy" through increased availability of favorite diversions "normally enriching to life." A narrower definition of "morale" implies a "disciplined and unified will: the loyalties of people must be mobilized and directed."<sup>22</sup> According to Herbert Blumer, "Modern war has made morale a consideration of

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<sup>22</sup>"Music in Wartime," New Republic, 7 Feb, 1944: 175-178.



primary importance."<sup>23</sup> The formation of a huge army of draftees in place of professional or volunteer forces during World War II compelled the country's attention to the "so-called spiritual factor." The "total" warfare aspect of the war also led to concerns about the morale of American citizens. When all citizens are enlisted in the war effort and the smallest details of their lives are subordinated to the mission of winning the war, it was thought that the government must cultivate and insure the people's loyalty. At first glance, it might be difficult to establish music as a morale booster, in both the broad and the narrow definitions. In the broad sense, music certainly can be a means of keeping people "happy." It is, first and foremost, entertainment. There was a prevailing view during World War II that people's spirits and thus morale were kept high by entertainment: movies, theatrical performances, concerts, dance bands, and other social events were ranked high as morale boosters. The narrow meaning of morale is more complicated in conjunction with music as it is difficult to understand how music can be a tool to mobilize and direct the public unless it is joined to words that tell the people why they must be loyal and why they

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<sup>23</sup>Herbert Blumer, "Morale: The State of the Problem," American Society in Wartime, ed. William Fielding Ogburn, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1943), 207.

must follow their leaders. If the right words are joined with a melody that people can remember or recognize after one or two hearings, then it is possible that music can be used as a morale builder in the narrow sense of the term.

Between 7 December 1941 and 14 August 1945, thousands of popular songs poured over the air waves, from bandstands and juke boxes, from phonographs and pianos in the front parlors, and from loudspeakers in factories and war industry plants. Americans were surrounded by the music of the times. The average radio listener heard music four-and-a-half hours a day.<sup>24</sup> There were talk shows (to elevate the listener), literary shows, newscasts, and broadcasts of classical music. In a "Survey of American's Radio Listening Habits," conducted for the Office of War Information, 8 December 1943, a cross-section of Americans were asked, "What kinds of programs do you listen to most?" Americans responded:

1. Straight News Broadcasts--64%
2. News Commentators--62%
3. Comedy and Variety Programs--49%
4. Quiz Programs--46%
5. Old Familiar Music--43%
6. Popular Music--42%
7. Religious Programs--35%
8. Talks, forums, etc.--33%
9. Classical Music--33%

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<sup>24</sup>Paul F. Lazarsfeld and Frank N. Stanton, eds., Radio Research, 1942-1943 (New York: Arno Press, 1979), 335.

- 10. Radio Plays (other than serials--33%
- 11. Sports--25%
- 12. Radio Serials--24%
- 13. Hillbilly or Country Music--23%<sup>25</sup>

Popular music, as always, was the staple broadcast material. Forty percent of air time on the radio was occupied by music that was popular with all age groups, especially those under age forty who said they wanted a variety of songs without repetition.<sup>26</sup> But now there was a new twist: both the music industry and the U.S. government expected music to be helpful for morale.<sup>27</sup>

Both American society and the United States government embarked on a campaign to maintain high morale. Raising and sustaining morale became all-important, and morale itself (at home and at the front) developed into one of the constant obsessions of the Allies in the Second World War.<sup>28</sup> The Office of

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<sup>25</sup>OWI: RG 208; "Surveys of Public Attitudes," May 1943-June 1944, SG 118, WNRC.

<sup>26</sup>Lazarsfeld and Stanton, Radio Research, 335.

<sup>27</sup>Paul Fussell, Wartime: Understanding and Behavior in the Second World War (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), 185.

<sup>28</sup>*Ibid.*, 185.

War Information's "Survey of Public Attitudes" in May 1943 asked five thousand Americans "What is our biggest problem in winning the war?" They responded: 1) Labor disputes (24%) 2) Farm labor shortage/Food production (18%) 3) Arousing the public; keeping up the public morale (11%). When the OWI asked the question again in April 1944, the public thought: "Arousing the public, keeping up public morale" was the number one problem.<sup>29</sup>

During World War II, the term "morale" came to designate a mystique indispensable to victory. In war time, "high morale" became a substitute for all kinds of lost things--happiness itself "had disappeared along with rubber, silk, and many other staples, to be replaced by the wartime synthetic, high morale, for the duration."<sup>30</sup> People could not be motivated to fight or support the war effort by filling their minds with lofty principles or political convictions; they were not interested. What did substitute for ideological commitment during World War II was morale.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>29</sup>OWI: RG 208; "Surveys of Public Attitudes," May 1944: SG 118, WNRC.

<sup>30</sup>Ibid., 144.

<sup>31</sup>William L. O'Neill, A Democracy at War: America's Fight at Home and Abroad in World War II, (New York: The Free Press, 1993), 326.

On the American homefront manufacturers of products like beer, chewing gum, and tobacco sold their products by arguing as one advertiser put it, that "Morale is a lot of little things." Among them was beer, "best consumed with Wholesome American Food." The advertisement continued, "Yes, morale is a lot of little things like this. Little things that help lift the spirits, keep up the courage. Little things that are . . . our American way of life."<sup>32</sup>

This advertiser was not alone in his use of the war and the premium placed on morale to sell his products. A glance through any magazine from the war years, 1941-1945, will show that almost every product on the American market could, in some way, be tied to the war and to maintaining morale, not to mention keeping the product before the public and hopefully luring post-war consumers who might remember the loyal "service" of a certain brand of soap flakes or breakfast cereal during the war.

There was great concern on the part of the OWI that the homefront was not as involved as it could be in winning the war. One OWI survey asked Americans three different times during 1942 and 1943 if they thought people were taking the war seriously enough. Their responses were:

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<sup>32</sup>Ibid., 145.

March 1942

Yes 41%  
 No 54%  
 Don't Know 5%

July 1942

Yes.....31%  
 No.....64%  
 Don't Know.....5%

June 1943

Yes 47%  
 No 48%  
 Don't know 5%<sup>33</sup>

When asked if Americans were making too many sacrifices or not enough, people responded:

	<u>August 1942</u>	<u>December 1942</u>
Too many	2%	4%
Right amount	22%	26%
Not enough	70%	65%
Don't know	6%	5%

	<u>January 1943</u>	<u>June 1943</u>
Too many	3%	4%
Right amount	31%	34%
Not enough	61%	59%
Don't know	5%	3% <sup>34</sup>

These surveys convinced the OWI that more had to be done to motivate the public toward a greater involvement in the war effort.

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<sup>33</sup>OWI: RG 208; "Surveys of Public Attitudes," Mar. 1942-June 1943: SG 118, WNRC.

<sup>34</sup>OWI: RG 208; "Surveys of Public Attitudes," Aug. 1942-June 1943, SG 118, WNRC.

The American music industry lost no time in joining the campaign to boost morale. In a full page editorial published in The Billboard, 13 December 1941, J.E. Broyles, president of the Rudolph Wurlitzer Company, said, "The most important qualification for a fighting force is its morale" which must be "supported by the morale of the home forces."<sup>35</sup> Broyles thought the greatest booster of morale was singing, and so he believed, the automatic phonograph industry (juke boxes) would be vital in maintaining high morale among Americans. Not only must American soldiers keep up their morale, but the morale of those people "back of the line," those left on the homefront, must also be supported. Broyles called morale "the personal feelings and efforts of the individuals composing the army," supported by the morale of the home forces. If homefront morale failed, he warned, the nation would be in jeopardy. Preserving morale, then was as vital as manufacturing weapons, and the great booster of morale, according to Broyles' rhetoric, was music. And, as the war news and war-related activities day after day weighed heavily on people's minds, music could give them much-needed relief. Dropping excess change into juke boxes would relieve stress and keep both army and civilian

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<sup>35</sup>J.E. Broyles, "Commercial Phonographs Build Morale," The Billboard, 13 Dec. 1941, vol. 53, no. 50: 64.

morale high.<sup>36</sup> It would also keep the manufacturers and owners of juke boxes in business which was a concern. There were rumors that the metals used in manufacturing juke boxes would be rationed or that their production would be halted altogether as were household appliances such as washing machines and refrigerators.

The unprovoked attack on Pearl Harbor sent American songwriters into a flurry of activity, producing combative, war-like songs. According to The Billboard's lead story in its 20 December 1941 issue, record producers were swamped with anti-Axis songs, and reliable estimates place the number of tunes peddled in the first weeks of the war at more than 1,000.<sup>37</sup> One publisher claimed to have had over four hundred tunes with Pearl Harbor as the theme submitted to his firm following 7 December 1941.<sup>38</sup> "Writers kept rushing into publishers' offices with songs

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<sup>36</sup>ibid., 64.

<sup>37</sup>"Wax Execs Optimistic Despite War; No Shortage Scares Yet, and Study of War Songs is On," The Billboard, 20 Dec. 1941, vol. 53, no. 51: 9; "Tin Pan Alley Fires Song Salvo at Axis; Air News, Enlistments and Paper Shortages Might Hurt," The Billboard, 20 Dec. 1941, vol.53 no. 51: 11.

<sup>38</sup>"Japs to Jeeps, Doughboy's Rose to Der Fuehrer's Face--There's Nary an 'Over There' in the Lot," The Billboard, 9 Jan, 1943, vol. 55, no. 2: 9.



inspired by the event," Variety said, though it added that, "The effort so far hasn't shown up Tin Pan Alley at its best."<sup>39</sup> The Billboard agreed, "Most of the ditties penned . . . have topical themes that may not hold water . . . the quality . . . will improve after composers cool off . . . and forget about just trying to be first out with a Jap or Hitler lyric."<sup>40</sup> The record publishers thought that if ten of the songs ever got anywhere, it would be a high number, but they were ready to "come into their own as dispensers of morale builder-uppers."<sup>41</sup>

Some of the titles, and their publishers, from this first wave of Tin Pan Alley war song hysteria were: "We'll Always Remember Pearl Harbor" (Mills), "Remember Pearl Harbor" (Joe Howard, independent publisher), "Let's Put the Axe to the Axis" (Famous), "The Sun Will Soon Be Setting for the Land of the Rising Sun" (Berlin), "We're Going to Find a Fellow Who Is Yellow and Beat Him Red, White and Blue" (Bergman, Vocco & Conn), "We've Got to Do a

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<sup>39</sup>"Inevitably, the War Songs," Variety, 17 Dec. 1941, vol. 145, no. 2: 2.

<sup>40</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>41</sup>"Wax Execs Optimistic," The Billboard, 20 Dec. 1941, vol. 53, no. 51: 9. "Tin Pan Alley Fires Song Salvo," The Billboard, 20 Dec. 1941, vol. 53. no. 51: 11.

Job on the Japs, Baby" (Bergman, Vocco & Conn), "They're Gonna Be Playin' Taps on the Japs" (Leeds), "I'm Going to Give Taps to the Japs" (Republic), "You're a Sap, Mr. Jap" (Mills), "Put the Heat on Hitler, Muss up Mussolini and Tie a Can to Japan" (Marks), "We'll Knock the Japs Right into the Laps of the Nazis" (Mills), "The Japs Haven't Got a Ghost of a Chance" (Remick), "Goodbye, Momma, I'm Off to Yokohama" (Chappell), "Oh, You Little Son of an Oriental" (Shapiro-Bernstein), "Wake Island Woke Up Our Land" (Robbins),<sup>42</sup> "Slap the Jap Right Off the Map" (Robbins), "We Are the Suns of the Rising Guns" (Robbins), "To Be Specific, It's Our Pacific" (Robbins), "When Those Little Yellow Bellies Meet the Cohens and the Kellys" (Gaskill), and "Let's Knock the 'Hit' Out of Hitler" (Arlen-Broadcast Music Incorporated).<sup>43</sup> Of these first war songs, Leonard Joy, RCA-

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<sup>42</sup>In the aftermath of Pearl Harbor, Americans watched as Wake Island's defenders withstood attack from 11 Dec. 1941 to 23 Dec. 1941 before falling to the Japanese. Stokesbury, A Short History of World War II, 201.

<sup>43</sup>"Inevitably, the War Songs," Variety, 17 Dec. 1941, vol. 145, no. 2: 2. "Disk Firms Make Haste Slowly on Recording New War Songs," The Billboard, 3 Jan. 1942, vol. 54, no. 1: 60. This listing of popular song titles and the sheet music or recordings can be located in the catalogs of the Music Division entitled "United States Popular Music Collection, 1941-1945," Fine Arts (Music) Reading Room, Music and Recorded Sound Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. (hereinafter cited as "U.S. Popular Music Collection, 1941-1945," Library of Congress.)

Victor's music director, said, "Most of them urge us to slap the Japs or axe the Axis. As a rule they're pretty bad, musically, and the rhymes are even worse."<sup>44</sup>

In the first months of the war, songwriters strained to write the Great American War Song, but none of these early songs caught on. Although the Japanese bore the brunt of the songwriters' wrath, the rest of the Axis was not forgotten. The songs were hastily written and rushed to the public in the composers' bid to write the first song to inspire the nation. Songwriter Burt Wheeler, won the race to be first when he introduced "We'll Knock the Japs Right into the Laps of the Nazis" before a nightclub audience on the evening of 7 December 1941:

Oh, we didn't want to do it,  
But they're asking for it now  
So, we'll knock the Japs  
Right into the laps of the Nazis!  
When they hop on Honolulu,  
That's a thing we won't allow  
So, we'll knock the Japs  
Right into the laps of the Nazis!  
Chins up, Yankees, let's see it through  
And show that there's no yellow  
In the red, white, and blue.  
I'd hate to see Yokohama  
When our brothers make their bow,

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<sup>44</sup>"Wartime Music," The Billboard, 31 Jan. 1942, vol. 54, no. 5: 68.

For we'll knock the Japs  
Right into the laps of the Nazis! <sup>45</sup>

One of the first war songs to be written that enjoyed some success was "We Did It Before," by Charles Tobias and Cliff Friend. It was created on the very day Pearl Harbor was bombed. Two days later, Eddie Cantor (Tobias' brother-in-law) hurriedly inserted it in Banjo Eyes, the Broadway musical in which he was then starring, and offered it as a stirring martial number that brought down the house.<sup>46</sup> It promised to "take the Nip out of the Nipponese and chase 'em back to their cherry trees." This was sung to a rousing, march-like tune faintly reminiscent of George M. Cohan's World War I blockbuster hit song, "Over There." "We Did It Before" offered Americans a message which bolstered confidence by reminding them of past military glories and exhorted: "We're one for all and all for one/We've got a job to be done."<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>45</sup>Burt Wheeler, "We'll Knock the Japs Right into the Laps of the Nazis!" (New York: Mills Music, Inc., 1941).

<sup>46</sup>David Ewen, All the Years of Popular Music (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1977), 427.

<sup>47</sup>Cliff Friend and Charlie Tobias, "We Did It Before and We Can Do It Again," (New York: M. Witmark & Sons, 1941).

By 6 A.M. on 8 December, songwriter Max Lerner had finished "The Sun Will Soon Be Setting on the Land of the Rising Sun." Three hours before Congress declared war on Japan, Carl Hoff and Orrin Tucker copyrighted "You're a Sap Mr. Jap." The nation heard, "You're a sap, Mr. Jap, to make a Yankee cranky . . . Uncle Sam is gonna spanky," and, "The A. B. C. and D.<sup>48</sup> will sink your rising sun . . . You don't know Uncle Sammy--when he fights for his rights you'll take it on the lamee".<sup>49</sup> Ten days after the attack, J. Fred Coots wrote and published the words and music of "Goodbye, Mamma, I'm Off to Yokohama." The song had a march-tempo, 4/4 meter with some syncopated rhythm. The recording begins with a trumpet fanfare, followed by a solo male voice singing the verse and the first chorus, then a male choir repeats the chorus, interspersed with trumpet fanfares. The tune is cheery and not unlike a Boy Scout hiking song

Johnny was a soldier boy,  
Who never looked for scraps,

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<sup>48</sup>ABCD: American, British, Chinese, and Dutch forces. Name given to powers arrayed against Japan. Newsweek, 24 November 1941, P. 24-26.

<sup>49</sup>"Inevitably, the War Songs," Variety, 17 Dec. 1941, vol, 145, no. 2: 2; "Disk Firms Make Haste Slowly on Recording New War Songs," The Billboard, 3 Jan. 1942, vol. 54, no. 1: 60.

But this young buckaroo,  
 Was Yankee through and through.  
 Then Johnny heard our country's call,  
 To arms against the Japs,  
 And as he marched away,  
 His buddies heard him say,

CHORUS:

Goodbye, Mamma,  
 I'm off to Yokohama,  
 For my red, white, and blue,  
 My country and you.  
 Goodbye, Mamma,  
 I'm off to Yokohama,  
 Just to teach all those Japs,  
 The Yanks are no saps.  
 A million fighting sons of Uncle Sam,  
 If you please,  
 Will soon have all those Japs right down,  
 On their Jap-a-knees.  
 So, Goodbye, Mamma,  
 I'm off to Yokohama,  
 For my country, my flag, and you.<sup>50</sup>

The title of the first nationally successful war song was already in the air, waiting for a songwriter to seize it and put it to use. The phrase, "Remember Pearl Harbor" is supposed to have first appeared in spaced capital letters at the top of mimeographed orders of the Office of Production Management in December

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<sup>50</sup>J. Fred Coots, "Goodbye, Mamma, I'm Off to Yokohama," (New York: Chappell & Co., Inc., 1941).

1941.<sup>51</sup> The phrase passed into the language and American culture.

There were several songs with the words "remember " and "Pearl Harbor" in the title, but "Remember Pearl Harbor," by Don Reid and Sammy Kaye, (also written before the smoke above Pearl Harbor cleared), was the Pearl Harbor song to survive and to be identified with that catastrophe. Written in a 6/8 march tempo and recorded by Eddy Howard's band employing a trumpet fanfare introduction and a male chorus, the song had a martial air and called on Americans to recall their past and to be victorious as their forefathers had been:

History in every century  
Records an act that lives forever more.  
We'll recall, as into line we fall,  
What happened on Hawaii's shore.

CHORUS:  
Let's REMEMBER PEARL HARBOR  
As we go to meet the foe.  
Let's REMEMBER PEARL HARBOR  
As we did the Alamo.  
We will always remember  
How they died for Liberty.

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<sup>51</sup>The Portland Oregonian claimed to have first coined the battle cry "Remember Pearl Harbor" on the copy of its editorial page printed 9 December 1941, but not on the streets until after midnight, making it 10 Dec. 1941. The OPM's claim is substantiated by a New York Times article of Dec. 11, 1941: 20. Stan Cohen, "V for Victory: America's Home Front During World War II (Missoula, MT: Pictorial Pictures Publishing Company, Inc., 1991), 36.

Let's REMEMBER PEARL HARBOR  
And go on to victory.<sup>52</sup>

"Remember Pearl Harbor" was not a big hit (in terms of selling a million copies of sheet music or records), and it did not last more than a few weeks on any of the popularity charts the music business had instituted between the years 1935 and 1940, but it did fill a void at the beginning of the war.<sup>53</sup> In fact, the song eventually ran afoul of the federal government. Deputy Attorney General Thomas B. Minnick, Jr. of the Office of the Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs asked Republic Music to delete the line "as we did the Alamo" from the song. It seemed it was no longer polite to recall that the United States avenged the Alamo in 1848 because Mexico, an enemy then, was now an ally. Minnick declared on 21 April 1942, that the words "Remember the Alamo" were an affront

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<sup>52</sup>Don Reid and Sammy Kaye, "Remember Pearl Harbor," (New York: Republic Music Corp., 1941).

<sup>53</sup>Your Hit Parade (sometimes referred to as Hit Parade or The Lucky Strike Hit Parade), a weekly radio program focusing on the most popular songs of the past week based on retail sales, was first broadcast on April 20, 1935. By 1940 both Variety and The Billboard published weekly tallies of the most popular songs according to sales of records, sheet music, and totals from juke boxes. There were also listings of the songs that were played most frequently by the major radio networks.



to Mexico "just when we are trying to establish good neighborly relations with the Latin-American Republics. . . . Bringing up sore wounds like the Battle of the Alamo . . . is in poor taste to say the least."<sup>54</sup> Republic Music complied with the federal government's request and NBC, CBS, and the Mutual Broadcasting networks agreed not to allow any of their member stations to broadcast the song in its original form. This also applied to shortwave radio.<sup>55</sup>

An even greater success, and the first war song to register as a best seller on the popularity charts, was Frank Loesser's "Praise the Lord and Pass the Ammunition." It was recorded with a trumpet fanfare introduction and sung by a male chorus to a folksong-type tune. The expressionistic sheet music cover vividly portrayed battle action: ten men engage in loading and firing an enormous gun, while the leader shouts orders, an enemy plane looms in the distance, and shells explode around the group. The story of the song, published with the sheet music, says that, "The pungent words of the battlefield have found their way into the lyrics of a truly great war song . . . it captures the spirit of a people aroused

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<sup>54</sup>"Raps 'Alamo' Lyric," Variety 22 April 1942, vol.146, no. 7: 1.

<sup>55</sup>*Ibid.*

and an army determined."<sup>56</sup> According to the legend (program note):

As sailors boiled from below decks of a U.S. Navy warship to fight off low flying Japanese planes, Chaplain William McGuire left his altar where it stood and ran to a gun station where one of the gunners had been killed and another wounded. In the unholy uproar of that torrent of bombs, Chaplain McGuire shouted his now famous words: 'I just got one of them!! Praise the Lord and Pass the Ammunition!!'<sup>57</sup>

Frank Loesser expropriated the story and hastily concocted the song which was also his first attempt at writing both the lyric and the tune. Before the war, he had been employed as a successful lyricist for various composers and counted among his successes "Jingle, Jangle, Jingle" and "I Don't Want to Walk without You." But "Praise the Lord and Pass the Ammunition" was Loesser's entree into the world of full-fledged songwriters. He took the story of the chaplain and, using military slang, put together the first really big hit song to deal directly with the war:

Down went the gunner, a bullet was his fate,  
Down went the gunner, and then the gunner's mate,  
Up jumped the sky pilot, gave the boys a look

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<sup>56</sup>Frank Loesser, "Praise the Lord and Pass the Ammunition," (New York: Famous Music Corp., 1942).

<sup>57</sup>Ibid.

And manned the gun himself,  
As he laid aside the Book, shouting:

"Praise the Lord and Pass the Ammunition!  
Praise the Lord and Pass the Ammunition!  
Praise the Lord and Pass the Ammunition  
And we'll all stay free!  
Praise the Lord and swing into position,  
Can't afford to be a politician,  
Praise the Lord, we're all between perdition  
And the deep blue sea!"

Yes, the sky pilot said it,  
You've got to give him credit  
For a son-of-a-gun of a gunner was he,  
Shouting : "Praise the Lord,  
We're on a mighty mission!  
All aboard! We're not a goin' fishin',  
Praise the Lord and pass the ammunition  
And we'll all stay free!"<sup>58</sup>

The real-life chaplain, Captain William McGuire, a Roman Catholic priest, later was unable to recall saying the words and wrote to LIFE, "If I said it, nobody could have heard me in the din of battle. But I certainly felt what the statement expresses."<sup>59</sup> It also turned out that Captain McGuire did not fire a gun at all but rather helped out by carrying ammunition. It was one of the early myths of the war, and no one wanted to deny it because everyone

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<sup>58</sup>Ibid.

<sup>59</sup>"New U.S. War Songs," LIFE, 2 Nov. 1942: 42.

vaguely believed that American needed morale incidents of heroism to inspire it. According to an editorial in the Milwaukee Journal, reprinted in Variety, the song was the current American interpretation of Oliver Cromwell's phrase, "Trust in God, but keep your powder dry."<sup>60</sup> The Office of War Information was solidly behind the song, forbidding it to be played on the radio more than once every four hours for fear that this morale booster would be plugged to death. This was an attempt to breathe spirit into and extend interest in the song beyond its usual playing life.<sup>61</sup>

Tin Pan Alley was delighted with "Praise the Lord." In just a few weeks, it sold more than 170,000 copies (with Loesser donating all royalties to Navy Relief). The demand for the tune was so great that Columbia Records was challenged to keep up with the requests for Kay Kyser's version. Columbia also tried unsuccessfully to restrict the number of times the song was played on the networks. Station owners seemed to think that no publishers or network executives could tell them how to run their

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<sup>60</sup>"'Praise the Lord's' Great Press," Variety, 4 Nov. 1942, vol. 148, no. 8: 41, 47.

<sup>61</sup>Richard Lingeman, Don't You know There's a War On?: The American Home Front, 1941-1945 (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1970), 212.

businesses, and they played "Praise the Lord" as often as they wanted.<sup>62</sup>

By 18 November 1942, "Praise the Lord" had sold 450,000 copies to the chagrin of some members of the clergy. According to Variety, "A minority of American religious leaders, mostly Protestant, . . . have condemned the lyrical co-mingling of firearms and theology." Furthermore Variety stated:

These vocal ministers soon found themselves the objects of government scrutiny by Washington officials and those who measured morale equations. Washington was "greatly disturbed by the anti-patriotic cold-as-ice attitude of numerous members of the clergy many of whom dominated the church publications and/or the church machinery in many denominations. The latter had recently aggravated the situation by refusing to encourage prayers for victory (i.e. shedding our enemies' blood) on Pearl Harbor Sunday."<sup>63</sup>

Variety traced the revulsion of the clergy towards the Second World War to their own excessive emotionalism in World War I and

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<sup>62</sup>"Praise the Lord's Great Press," Variety, 4 Nov. 1942, vol. 148, no. 8: 47.

<sup>63</sup>"Praise the Lord' Wow 450,000 Copies Despite Frowns from the Clergy," Variety, 18 Nov. 1942, vol. 148, no. 11: 3, 18.

the vows of these same clergy not to repeat their hysteria. The Virginia Conference of the Methodist Church and its newspaper the Virginia Methodist refused to help pump up morale for the struggle. The Methodist Church had long been a "stronghold of pacifism," with leaders like Dr. Ernest Fremont Tittle of Evanston, Illinois; Dr. Henry Hitt Crane of Detroit; Dr. Albert Edward Day of Pasadena, California; and Dr. Ralph Washington Sockman of New York. All were uncompromising pacifists who led the Methodist General Conference, meeting in Atlantic City in 1940, to declare: "The Methodist Church . . . will not officially endorse, support, or participate in war. . . . Agencies of the church shall not be used in preparation for war."<sup>64</sup> "The Church, as such, is not at war," was the Methodist Church's motto, and on 1 December 1942 the Virginia Methodist asked that "Praise the Lord" be removed from the air:

There's no denying that the tune is a catchy one,  
but the words are no credit to America's  
chaplains. . . . whether the song is sacrilegious . . .

<sup>64</sup>"The Methodists Join the War," Time, 15 May 1944: 42. For further information concerning the pacifist stand of the Methodist Church and the eventual recanting of this position by its General Assembly in May 1944, see: "The Church Is Not at War," The Christian Century, 25 Mar. 1942: 375-377; "Is the Church at War?" The Christian Century, 8 April 1942: 468-469; "Methodists Shift Position on War," The Christian Century, 17 May 1944: 624+; "The Methodist Recantation," The Christian Century, 21 June 1944: 742-744; "Correspondence," The Christian Century, 12 July 1944: 831-832.

may be debatable, but the fact that it gives an entirely erroneous concept of a chaplain's activities is not debatable. . . .It certainly is no great credit to sing with great gusto about a "sky pilot" who becomes a killer. . . we should like to see the song banned from the air.<sup>65</sup>

Not all of the American clergy reacted unfavorably to "Praise the Lord and Pass the Ammunition." The Liberal Church of Denver, Colorado, ended its service with the Lord's Prayer and the congregation singing "Praise the Lord" as a finale every Sunday for the duration of the war. A cantor at a Brooklyn temple, who normally sang "Oh, Jerusalem," a standard song, added "Praise the Lord" as a part of the service.<sup>66</sup> The song appealed to Americans' view of the war as a holy crusade. The OWI and other government agencies depicted World War II as a struggle of good versus evil, of slavery versus freedom. "Praise the Lord and Pass the Ammunition" allowed all Americans to be a part of this fight by singing along with the recording. It would be possible to "all stay free" because Americans were "on a mighty mission."

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<sup>65</sup>"Church Paper Asks Radio Ban 'Praise the Lord,'" Variety, 2 Dec. 1942, vol. 148, no. 13: 38.

<sup>66</sup>"'Praise the Lord' Wow, 450,000 Copies Sold Despite Frowns from the Clergy," Variety, 18 Nov. 1942, vol. 148, no. 11: 3, 18.

The public taste for war songs and that of the Tin Pan Alley songwriters passed through several stages. The patriotic phase came first. Following the flood of Pearl Harbor songs, The Billboard counseled smart songwriters and publishers to concentrate their efforts on "tunes of a less specific nature," and no doubt there would be another "Over There" to take the country "by storm." As soon as the war was well under way, The Billboard added, the publishers might find the public as receptive to ballads, love songs, and torch songs as they were in peace time (a suggestion that was to prove prophetic). American publishers pointed to England where sentimental songs like "Maria Elena," "Daddy," and "I Don't Want to Set the World on Fire" were three of the top songs in 1941, when England had been at war for three years.<sup>67</sup> Music industry leaders also hinted that record companies wanted to be sure that the tunes they recorded had "all the earmarks of potential hits rather than a reflection of the current newspaper headlines."<sup>68</sup> The anticipated profitability of a song

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<sup>67</sup>"Tin Pan Alley Fires Song Salvos at Axis; Air News, Enlistments and Paper Shortages Might Hurt," The Billboard, 20 Dec. 1941, Vol. 53, no. 51: 11.

<sup>68</sup>"Disk Firms Make Haste Slowly on Recording New War Songs," Variety, 3 Jan. 1942, vol. 54, no. 1: 60.



was paramount in both sheet music and recording companies' decisions to publish and promote war songs. They never lost sight of the fact that music was a business, and that the war could be an important factor in their future earnings.

Veteran songwriters watched with amusement as the younger composers tried to write the Great American War Song. Older songwriters expected the percentage of rejections of new songs by publishers to be "terrific." According to a group of veteran songwriters in Philadelphia, most of the new songs were "doomed to oblivion." These experts advised the use of classical composers' tunes (which had been looted for many years--mainly in the service of love songs) as a natural source for war songs. For example, Chopin's "Polonaise Militaire" might be fitted with appropriate words to help a "Polish comeback." Tschaikovsky's "1812 Overture" might be passed off as "Hit Hitler on the Run from Russia."<sup>69</sup> Few of the younger composers took the advice.

In the first few months of World War II, music publishers, songwriters, band leaders, radio chains, and record companies were dissatisfied, for the most part, with the quality of new patriotic songs. Publishers were not confident about publishing or recording

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<sup>69</sup>"Old Timers Doom New War Songs and Suggest More Tschaikovsky," The Billboard, 3 Jan. 1942, vol. 54, no. 1: 11.

these songs. In part, they thought that Americans were still in shock and that the full realization of being at war had not yet come home. But the primary reason that publishers and recording companies hesitated to produce war tunes was that they did not want to be laden with unsalable music if the public taste shifted away from war-like, revenge-filled songs. At the end of January 1942, Leonard Joy, RCA-Victor's music director, said he was still receiving an average of five war tunes a day. He thought that the grim, angry feelings behind these songs would soon be replaced by the more sentimental or "jolly type," such as the nostalgic ones predominating in England in late 1941 and early 1942.<sup>70</sup> An editorial in The Billboard by Harold Humphrey pointed out that the best selling songs in America before the war were almost all sentimental tunes. On The Billboard Music Popularity Chart for the week of 11 April 1942, for example, most of the best sellers on both the record and sheet music lists were sentimental ballads or novelty tunes: "I Don't Want to Walk without You," "Jersey Bounce," "Deep in the Heart of Texas," and "Miss You. There were some pre-war draft songs such as "'Till Reveille" and "Goodbye, Dear, I'll Be Back in a Year" that made the "Going Strong" section of The

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<sup>70</sup>Harold Humphrey, "Wartime Music," The Billboard, 31 Jan. 1942, vol. 54, no. 5: 68.

Billboard's record buying guide, but these topical songs were the exceptions.<sup>71</sup>

Besides sentiment, the editor seemed to think that these songs on the best seller lists had musical merit, and that the American public wanted, first of all, a good tune. A pre-war song written in early 1941, "Any Bonds Today?" by Irving Berlin, never reached the top of any chart even though it was promoted heavily on radio, records, and the stage. Warner Brothers produced a cartoon with Bugs Bunny, Porky Pig, and Daffy Duck singing "Any Bonds Today?"<sup>72</sup> There was even an industry-wide campaign by the juke box operators to have "Any Bonds Today?" placed in the number one

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<sup>71</sup>"Music Popularity Chart," The Billboard, 11 April, 1942, vol. 54, no. 15: 21. The compilation of the best sellers was based on reports from retail stores of their ten best selling records and sheet music of the previous week. Retail stores in the following cities were included in the reports: New York City, Bridgeport, CN; Boston, Pittsburgh, Philadelphia, Salt Lake City, Portland, Los Angeles, Cincinnati, Milwaukee, Detroit, Des Moines, Kansas City, MO; Springfield, MO; St. Louis, Birmingham, New Orleans, Washington, D.C.; Louisville, KY; Butte, MT; Richmond, VA; St. Paul, MN; Atlanta, Phoenix, AZ; Seattle, and San Antonio. "The Billboard Music Popularity Charts" began with the July 20, 1940, issue and continue to the present day.

<sup>72</sup>Robert Mugge, dir., Entertaining the Troops: American Entertainers in World War II, (RCA/Columbia Pictures Home Video, 1992).

tray on every juke box in the nation in an effort to sell more defense bonds.<sup>73</sup> The song was adopted by the United States Treasury as the official song of the National Defense Savings Program. Although it may have done the job intended for it with a lively tune and syncopated rhythm, "Any Bonds Today?" was never a big selling recording. It asked Americans to part with their money before they were in the war:

The tall man with the high hat  
And the whiskers on his chin  
Will soon be knocking at your door  
And you ought to be in.  
The tall man with the high hat  
Will be coming down your way  
Get your savings out  
When you hear him shout "Any bonds today?"

ANY BONDS TODAY?  
Bonds of freedom that's what I'm selling.  
ANY BONDS TODAY?  
Scrape up the most you can  
Here comes the freedom man  
Asking you to buy a share of freedom today.  
Any stamps today?  
We'll be blest if we all invest in the U.S.A.  
Here comes the freedom man  
Can't make tomorrow's plan  
Not unless you buy a share of freedom today.

First came the Czechs and then came the Poles  
And then the Norwegians with three million souls.

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<sup>73</sup>"All Out for Uncle Sam," The Billboard, 27 Dec. 1941, vol. 53, no. 52: 128.

Then came the Dutch, the Belgians and France  
 Then all of the Balkans with hardly a chance.  
 It's all in the Book if only you look  
 It's there if you read the text.  
 They fell every one at the point of a gun  
 America mustn't be next.

ANY BONDS TODAY?  
 Bonds of freedom that's what I'm selling  
 ANY BONDS TODAY?  
 Scrape up the most you can  
 Here comes the freedom man  
 Asking you to buy a share of freedom today.  
 Any bonds today?

All you give will be spent to live in the Yankee way  
 Scrape up the most you can  
 Here comes the freedom man.  
 Asking you to buy a share of freedom today.<sup>74</sup>

Following the attack on Pearl Harbor, Irving Berlin added a new verse dealing with the Japanese and containing militant lyrics uncharacteristic of his style (" . . . wipe Mr. Jap from the face of the map) to "Any Bonds Today?", and Bing Crosby introduced the new version on his radio show, 16 December 1941.<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>74</sup>Irving Berlin, "Any Bonds Today?": Theme Song of the National Defense Savings Program, U.S. Defense Savings Bonds and Stamps, copyright by Henry Morgenthau, Jr., Secretary of the Treasury, Washington, D.C. , 1941.

<sup>75</sup>"Berlin Slaps the Japs in His 'Any Bonds ' Song," Variety, 17 Dec. 1941, vol. 145, no. 2: 3.

Bonds for the planes  
 And bonds for the tanks  
 And bonds for the ships,  
 Meaning "Here come the Yanks."  
 Bonds for the guns  
 And the shot and the shell  
 And bonds to avenge  
 The heroes who fell.  
 They died in the night  
 With no chance to fight,  
 But wait 'til the final text--  
 We'll wipe Mr. Jap  
 From the face of the map,  
 And Germany has to be next.<sup>76</sup>

Harold Humphrey, in his column "Wartime Music," (The Billboard, 31 January 1942), said that "Any Bonds Today?" had failed because the American public generally looked on music as a form of relaxation and entertainment and not as a propaganda tool.<sup>77</sup> Even a composer as celebrated as Irving Berlin was not able to write a hit every time--especially when writing songs to rally the troops and the civilians on the homefront. Berlin was by far the most successful of the Tin Pan Alley composers and could rightly be called the greatest war songwriter. Although it appeared

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<sup>76</sup>ibid.

<sup>77</sup>Harold Humphrey, "Wartime Music," The Billboard, 31 Jan. 1942, vol. 54, no. 5: 68.

in 1938, "God Bless America" soon became synonymous with patriotism. The tunes for his show This Is the Army--"This Is the Army, Mr. Jones," "I Left My Heart at the Stage Door Canteen," "The Army's Made a Man Out of Me," "I'm Getting Tired So I Can Sleep," "Oh, How I Hate to Get Up in the Morning,"--achieved wide notice, and his patriotic numbers written in support of various government drives were certainly superior to the others in this genre, but none made any lasting impression on the popularity charts. The best of these was "Any Bonds Today?". There were also "Arms for the Love of America," (a salute to the Army Ordnance Department) "Arms for the love of America/ For the love of ev'ry mother's son/Who's depending on the work that must be done/By the man behind the man behind the gun"),<sup>78</sup> "Angel of Mercy," and "I Paid My Income Tax Today." Berlin's "There Are No Wings in a Foxhole"(Dedicated to the Men of the Infantry), is a prime example of a song written to recognize a component of the military which might not ordinarily receive much attention. As the pedestrian lyrics indicate, the life of a foot-soldier is less glamorous than those who fly the planes or drive the tanks:

THERE ARE NO WINGS ON A FOXHOLE,  
If that's where you happen to be.

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<sup>78</sup>Irving Berlin, "Arms for the Love of America," (New York: Irving Berlin Music Corp, 1941).

While the shells are flying,  
 It's doing or dying for the men of the infantry.  
 There are no wheels on your tootsies,  
 When you march from night 'till dawn.  
 Twenty miles of hiking is not to your liking,  
 But the foot soldier marches on.  
 From the night 'till the dawn,  
 The footsoldier marches on.  
 There's a sharp end on your rifle,  
 When you're close to the enemy.  
 At that close-up meeting,  
 There is no retreating,  
 For the men of the Infantry.<sup>79</sup>

A patriotic theme was not enough to sell a song; it also had to have musical merit and a "strong touch of sentiment."<sup>80</sup> "God Bless America" might be called the outstanding example of this rule, but there were extenuating circumstances. The melody had originally been intended to for a song entitled "I Love My Wife" in Berlin's World War I soldier show Yip, Yip, Yaphank, but had been put aside unused. The song lyric for "God Bless America" was written shortly after Berlin's return home from a 1938 trip abroad, during which he had seen the shadows of Fascism lengthening across Europe. The

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<sup>79</sup>Irving Berlin, "There Are No Wings on a Foxhole (For the Men of the Infantry)," (New York: Irving Berlin Music Corp., 1944).

<sup>80</sup>Harold Humphrey, "Wartime Music," The Billboard, 31 Jan. 1942, vol. 54, no. 5: 68.



result was "God Bless America," which he thought too excessive and sentimental for a soldier show,<sup>81</sup> especially the lines, "God bless America, My home sweet home."<sup>82</sup>

Berlin presented the song, with these new lyrics, to Kate Smith and on 10 November 1938, the evening before Armistice Day ,11 November, and a few months before Nazi bombs fell on Poland. In September 1939, she introduced this patriotic song on her weekly radio show The Kate Smith Hour. She closed the show with "God Bless America" three weeks in a row and then omitted it on the fourth week. This caused such an outcry from her listeners that Smith never closed a show during the war without singing this song.<sup>83</sup> It was destined to become almost a second national

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<sup>81</sup>Ronald L. Davis, A History of Music In American Life, Volume III: The Modern Era, 1920-Present, (Malabar, FL: Robert L. Krieger Publishing Company, 1981), 337.

<sup>82</sup>Irving Berlin, "God Bless America," (New York: Irving Berlin Inc. Music Publishers, 1939).

<sup>83</sup>Michael R. Pitts, Kate Smith, A Bio-Bibliography, (Westport, CN: Greenwood Press, 1988), 8.

anthem (some thought it was) as she sang it time and again during the dark years ahead.<sup>84</sup>

There is little doubt that "God Bless America" was sold to the American public by Kate Smith, who sang it countless times over the air and also recorded it.<sup>85</sup> This song, along with "When the Moon Comes Over the Mountain" (written by Howard Johnson, Harry Woods, and Kate Smith, 1931), became her theme song. "God Bless America" succeeds on several levels, musically, emotionally, and lyrically. Berlin's choice of lyric allows the singer or listener the latitude to imagine the country from "sea to shining sea" or from the "mountains to the prairies." Berlin's words are purposely ambiguous, no actual landmarks or geographical names are mentioned. This allows the singer or listener to interject his own personal understanding of "mountains" or "prairies" or "oceans white with foam." Berlin merely hints at the grandeur of the land

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<sup>84</sup>Davis, 337.

<sup>85</sup>Both Kate Smith and Irving Berlin donated, in perpetuity, all of their royalties from "God Bless America" to the Boy and Girl Scouts of America. Mrs. Ralph J. Bunch, Joe Dimaggio, and Theodore Roosevelt Jackson were appointed as Trustees of the "God Bless America" Fund; Kate Smith was also responsible for selling over \$600,000,000 in war bonds--\$112,000,000 of this total in a twenty-four hour radio marathon on Feb. 1, 1944. DeLong, The Mighty Music Box, 255.

and calls on a transcendent deity to watch over the country "from above." He also uses personification to his advantage when he identifies America as a female, "stand beside her and guide her." The feminine pronoun kindles thoughts of the maternal, an image often invoked by songwriters to capture the essence of their homeland, for example "Mother Russia," But Berlin's America is also a feminine presence which needs protection. The song is both personal and impersonal, precise yet vague, march-like while at the same time being reverent. Berlin's lyrics compel the listener to identify with the song's most personal sentiments by using first person pronouns, "Land that I love." This same type of personal sentiment is expressed in the concluding lines; these lyrics state that America is "My home, sweet home." "God Bless America" is purposefully vague in the verse that sets the scene in which "storm clouds gather;" these are the clouds of war in Europe, or as Berlin calls it "far across the sea." He calls on Americans to "all be grateful" that they live in a "land that's free." And finally, the tune can be expressed in different musical styles. Depending on the interpretation, "God Bless America" can be played by a band or orchestra with a march tempo, or it can be interpreted equally as well as a stately hymn. It is a matter of musical arrangement, the

type of musical ensemble performing the song, and performance style.<sup>86</sup>

Some of the flag-waving tunes of this first phase of songwriting, (along with such patriotic war-horses as "Battle Hymn of the Republic," "Anchors Aweigh," "I Am an American," and "Say a Prayer for the Boys Over There,"--a World War I number), were: "We Did It Before," "Let's Put New Glory in Old Glory," "There's a Star Spangled Banner Waving Somewhere," and "We Must Be Vigilant"--to the tune of "American Patrol"--a call to arms featuring Phil Spitalny and his All Girl Orchestra on the Hour of Charm :

We must be vigilant!  
 We must be vigilant!  
 American Patrol  
 With arms for the army, ships for the navy,  
 Let this be our goal.  
 We must be diligent!  
 We must be diligent!  
 American Patrol!  
 Protect our shoreline to the door line  
 Of every native soul.  
 We need this solidarity  
 Or else divided we will fall;  
 It means the popularity  
 Of peace and happiness for all.

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<sup>86</sup>For an alternate view of Berlin's "God Bless America" see Richard Pascal, "Walt Whitman and Woody Guthrie: American Prophet-Singers and Their People," Journal of American Studies, 24: 1 (April 1990), 41-59.

Behind this cause we must keep rallying,  
 Let there be no dilly-dallying;  
 Keep us free from shilly-shallying

Hark to freedom's call.  
 On the Land! In the Air! On the sea! Ev'rywhere!  
 Oh Lord God lend thy might  
 To us who claim the right to live in liberty,  
 And guide us on our way to that triumphant day  
 When all men shall be free.  
 The Pilgrim Fathers found this land a hallow'd ground  
 Where thy will must be done,  
 And in this cause we shall not pause  
 Until victory is won.<sup>87</sup>

There was also the version of "American Patrol"--as given a bouncy swing arrangement by Glenn Miller--as well as, "Me and My Uncle Sam," "Ballad for Americans," and "This Is Worth Fighting For." Meredith Willson's "America Calling" entreated: "You Sons of America/Take your stand for the Red, White and Blue/North to the boundary/And coast to coast/ Your America's calling to you."<sup>88</sup>

After 1942, Tin Pan Alley patriotism, songs that expressed love of country and support for the war effort, gave way to more sentimental, romance-driven songs. These sentimental songs

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<sup>87</sup>Edgar Leslie and Joseph A. Burke, "We Must Be Vigilant," (New York: Bregman, Vocco and Conn, Inc., 1942).

<sup>88</sup>Meredith Willson, "America Calling," (New York, Irving Berlin, Inc., 1942).

usually had a soldier in them, but now there was a love interest: "I Left My Heart at the Stage Door Canteen," and "The Shrine of St. Cecilia" were two of the most popular.

I kneel in my solitude  
And silently pray  
That heaven will protect you dear  
And there'll come a day  
The storm will be over  
And that we'll meet again  
AT THE SHRINE OF SAINT CECILIA<sup>89</sup>

There was also "Rose Ann of Charing Cross," "He Wears a Pair of Silver Wings," ("Altho' some people say he's just a crazy guy/To me he means a million other things/For he's the one who taught this happy heart of mine to fly/HE WEARS A PAIR OF SILVER WINGS"),<sup>90</sup> and "A Boy in Khaki, A Girl in Lace."<sup>91</sup>

The song "When the Lights Go On Again (All Over the World)," started a trend that alarmed the Office of War Information and other federal government offices charged with maintaining the fighting spirit and morale of the homefront. Written in 1942 by

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<sup>89</sup>Carroll Loveday and Jo Kern, "The Shrine of Saint Cecilia," (Chicago: Braun Music Co., 1941).

<sup>90</sup>Eric Maschwitz and Michael Carr, "He Wears a Pair of Silver Wings," (New York: Shapiro, Bernstein and Co., Inc., 1941).

<sup>91</sup>"U. S. Popular Music Collection, 1941-1945," Library of Congress.

Eddie Seiler, Sol Marcus, and Bennie Benjemen, "When the Lights Go on Again" was a song looking forward to the end of the war, to a time when soldiers and sailors would return to their homes and the blissful world that would exist in peace time. There would be no need for blackouts, and there would be no more bombs falling from the skies. The Office of War Information actively discouraged such thinking as "overly optimistic," "escapist," and corrupted by wishful thinking that was dangerous to the war effort. These songs like "There'll Soon Be a Rainbow" by Henry Nemo and David Saxon, "Vict'ry Polka," by Samuel Cahn and Jule Styne, faded, but not before marking a place on the best seller lists:<sup>92</sup>

When we have our victory,  
And we've added to our history;  
It will be right there to see  
How sweet and simple life can be.

When the lights go on again  
All over the world  
And the boys are home again  
All over the world  
And rain or snow is all  
That may fall from the skies above,  
A kiss won't mean "Goodbye,"

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<sup>92</sup>"Pop Songs End War Before We've Begun," Variety, 8 July 1942, vol. 147, no. 5: 1; Office of War Information: Record Group 208; Records of the Deputy Chief, Radio Division, New York, Dec. 1942-Dec. 1945: Subgroup 169, Washington National Records Center, Suitland, Maryland. (Hereinafter referred to as OWI: RG 208; SG 169, WNRC).

But "Hello" to love;  
 When the lights go on again  
 All over the world  
 And the ships will sail again  
 All over the world  
 Then we'll have time for things  
 Like wedding rings,  
 And free hearts will sing,  
 When the lights go on again  
 All over the world.<sup>93</sup>

Also in this sentimental mood, but certainly in a category all by itself, was Irving Berlin's "White Christmas." Berlin's greatest war time ballad--and one of the most successful songs ever written--was not intended as a war song. But American soldiers fighting in the swamps and jungles of the Pacific islands seized "White Christmas" as a nostalgic remembrance of home and holiday peace and goodwill to savor when the war was at its worst. (Later Allied soldiers in North Africa would rewrite the words to suit their isolated situation: "I'm dreaming of a white mistress.")<sup>94</sup>

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<sup>93</sup>Eddie Seiler, Sol Marcus, Bennie Benjemen, "When the Lights Go on Again, (All Over the World)," (New York: Campbell, Loft & Porgie, Inc., 1942).

<sup>94</sup>Martin Page, "Kiss Me Goodnight, Sergeant Major:" The Songs and Ballads of World War II, (London: Granada Publishing, Limited, 1975), 69-99; Brian Murdoch, Fighting Songs and Warring Words: Popular Lyrics of Two World Wars, (London and New York: Routledge, 1990), 175-208.



Berlin could not have guessed the impact that the song, introduced by Bing Crosby in the movie Holiday Inn, in October 1942, in plenty of time for the Christmas season, would have.<sup>95</sup> Nor could he have gauged the extent of its popularity on the homefront, where it became the longest running song on Your Hit Parade with eighteen appearances in 1942 and 1943, ten of these in first place. "White Christmas" was the biggest selling hit of the war. It went on to sell more than 1,000,000 copies in sheet music alone--the first such sale in a decade--repeating this dominance during the Christmas seasons of 1943 and 1944. It was a song in the wartime mood--a bit sad and yearning--emotions with which both soldiers and civilians could identify.<sup>96</sup>

In Irving Berlin, author Michael Freeland claims that Berlin never intended a wartime theme for "White Christmas." Berlin said, "It came out of a time when we were at war, and it became a peace song in wartime, nothing I ever intended." "White Christmas" was linked with the war because of Berlin's genius for expressing the emotions of so many who were far from home for several Christmas seasons. The mood of the song is quiet and dreamy.

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<sup>95</sup>Davis, A History of Music in American Life, 340.

<sup>96</sup>David Ewen, All the Years of Popular Music, (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc.), 431.

"White Christmas" evokes a reverie of quiet ease, while it recalls the past and invokes the future but does not describe the present. It is a song which requires no particular religious faith, since no mention beyond the word "Christmas" is made of the significance of the holiday. Like other mythic American holiday scenes, (for example, Thanksgiving in the United States is usually depicted in a New England setting with colorful autumn leaves, a bountiful harvest and of course the Pilgrims--a scene that has little basis in reality for most Americans), Christmas is assumed to be a part of a collective memory that is Christian, rural, and somewhere in the North. It is a song which is all encompassing, and therefore appealing to a nation at war. It asks no commitment of the listeners, but refers to a mythical past and a mist-shrouded future in which listeners can mingle their own dreams and memories. Most of all, Berlin paints a glowing picture of something Americans loved that could not be destroyed by war: "a White Christmas,"<sup>97</sup> that lives in the imagination.

Despite the great success of "White Christmas," the trade papers reported that Berlin considered his tune a fluke. It was written for a stage show that was never produced and finally came

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<sup>97</sup>Irving Berlin, "White Christmas," (Irving Berlin Music Corporation, 1942).

out in a movie. Asked by Variety if he considered "White Christmas" a war song, Berlin replied: "What is a war song? Some songs are popular during war and others aren't. Goodness knows 'White Christmas' isn't a war song by the farthest stretch of the imagination, but boys in the Solomons and boys in Africa are singing it. So--it's a war song."<sup>98</sup> The song evoked such strong emotions that Woody Herman reported in January 1943, "We were requested at the Stage Door Canteen not to play 'White Christmas,' so we avoid playing it at camps, too. It makes the boys too nostalgic."<sup>99</sup> Introducing "White Christmas" during his performance on N.B.C.'s Sixth War Loan Program, Let's Talk Turkey to Japan, Bing Crosby said:

On a holiday like this, friends, is when our men overseas . . . have to swallow the biggest lumps. All they really think of is the cozy, quiet warmth of home on a holiday. And everywhere I went they asked to hear, "White Christmas." It got so I hesitated about doing it because it caused such a welling nostalgic yearning among the men that it made them sad. Heaven knows making them sad wasn't my job. . . . but every time I tried to slack it they'd holler for it. Sometimes we all got a little dewy-eyed.

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<sup>98</sup>"Music Biz Still Hunting that Boff War Song," Variety, 6 Jan. 1943, vol., 149, no. 4: 187.

<sup>99</sup>"Jump Music and Solid Ballads Liked Best from Bands in Camps," Variety, 6 Jan. 1943, vol. 149, no. 4: 188.

You can't know . . . and yet you must know how . . . [Sings]  
 "They're dreaming of a White Christmas . . ." <sup>100</sup>

Variety called "White Christmas" the most valuable song copyright in the world. Crosby's recording for Decca sold over 24 million records between 1942-1949<sup>101</sup> and The Billboard ranked it as the number two song of the 1940s.<sup>102</sup> Berlin must have some hints as to the potential for success the song had. Michael Freeland claims that upon finishing "White Christmas," Irving Berlin, working in Hollywood, called his agent in New York and told him that not only was it the best song he [Berlin] had ever written, but it was also the best song that anyone had ever written.<sup>103</sup> If continued popularity and sales receipts are any indication, Irving Berlin may have written the most popular song of all times.

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<sup>100</sup>"Let's Talk Turkey to Japan," NBC's Sixth War Loan Program, 23 November 1944, RG 208: OWI; SG 169, Records of the Deputy Chief of the Radio Bureau, New York, December 1942-December 1945, WNRC.

<sup>101</sup>Ewen, All the Years of Popular Music, 430.

<sup>102</sup>The Billboard Book of Number One Hits, (Cincinnati, OH: The Billboard, 1985), 120.

<sup>103</sup>Freeland, 127.

Contrasting with the sentimental songs, several more vibrant tunes became famous. In 1942 "Deep in the Heart of Texas," by June Hershey and Don Swander, was twelve weeks on the Hit Parade, five of these weeks in the number one spot.<sup>104</sup> In fact it was so popular with workers in war munitions plants, who used their hammers and wrenches to tap out the hand claps of the song on their machines, that factory supervisors in England suspended playing the song when several machines were damaged as a result of the hammers' taps.<sup>105</sup> "I Got Spurs That Jingle, Jangle, Jingle," by Frank Loesser, actually a caricature of the traditional cowboy song, caught the civilian imagination with its theme of packing up belongings and moving on, mirroring the defense workers migrating to the war production centers on the West Coast and soldiers boarding troop trains. A favorite with the GIs and with the folks on the homefront was the cautionary "Don't Sit Under the Apple Tree," in which the absent soldier warns his girlfriend back home not to "fool around" after hearing a buddy describe a girl "who likes to pet" and this description fits her "to a T." The melody of "Don't Sit

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<sup>104</sup>Robert Lissauer, Encyclopedia of Popular Music: 1888 to the Present, (New York: Paragon House, 1991), 159.

<sup>105</sup>"Texas' Song a War Hazard," Variety 22 July 1942, vol. 147, no. 7: 1.

Under the Apple Tree" (Charles Tobias-Lew Brown-Sam H. Stept) was first used for a lyric entitled "Anywhere the Bluebird Goes," but as "Don't Sit Under the Apple Tree" it was first introduced in the Broadway show Yokel Boy in 1939. The Andrews Sisters popularized it, first in the movie Private Buckaroo (1942), and then in a Decca recording.<sup>106</sup>

While most of the songs discussed, thus far, dealt with civilian life on the homefront, Tin Pan Alley had not given up the quest for a solid, military-style war song. The sentimental songs and the songs that looked forward the end of the war were still considered unsuitable for the purpose of uniting Americans in the war effort. Since the songs about the homefront could not do the job, Tin Pan Alley looked elsewhere. The Alley turned to the men and women serving in the military for inspiration with the hope that the Great American War Song might emerge before more time passed.

The men in the service had been getting their share of attention in popular song since the beginning of the peacetime draft, the first ever in U. S. history, with the passage of the Burke-Wadsworth Selective Service Act in September 1940. The Selective Training and Service Act called for the creation of forty

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<sup>106</sup>Ewen, All the Years, 431.

thousand local civilian-run Selective Service boards and the registration of all men between the ages of twenty-one and thirty-six, and the training, for one year, of more than one million soldiers plus another 800,000 reserves.<sup>107</sup> When the draft extension was passed in 1941, it was duly recorded in song: "I Won't Be Back in a Year, Little Darling," an amendment of the original 1940 title "I'll Be Back in a Year." Then came the war and an explosion of what Richard Lingeman calls "Soldier Boy" songs, most of which were either sentimental or humorous. Some of the "soldier boy" songs included: "Till Reveille," "Last Call for Love," and "After Taps." Others appeared briefly and then faded such as "I'll Be Marching to a Love Song," "Cleaning My Rifle (and Dreaming of You)," "Sweetheart's Manual of Arms," "If He Can Fight Like He Can Love," "He Enlisted in the Navy," "Soldier Boy," "Our Boy's in Navy Blue," "There's Something About a Sailor," "I'll Never Forget the Day I Met My Sailor," "Wait Until the Girls Get in the Army, Boys," and "He's 1-A in the Army and He's A-1 in My Heart."<sup>108</sup> The last of these was recorded seven weeks before Pearl Harbor was attacked, but within

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<sup>107</sup>Stokesbury, A Short History of World War II, 119.

<sup>108</sup>"U.S. Popular Music Collection, 1941-1945," Library of Congress.

a few weeks of its release the song's lyrics enjoyed added meaning in the new wave of romantic patriotism that followed America's entry into the war.

From coast to coast in this great nation,  
Each man has got a classification.  
I've got a guy who's really something  
This man of mine, he ain't missin' nothin',  
No wonder I'm happy to say:

He's 1-A in the army and he's A-1 in my heart,  
He's gone to help the country that helped him get a start.  
I love him so because I know he wants to do his part,  
For he's 1-A in the army and he's A-1 in my heart.  
And just in case you're quizzical,  
I'm gonna tell you now,  
He passed the toughest physical--  
He passed it, folks, and how!  
For I know why he rates so high on Uncle Sammy's chart.  
'Cause he's 1-A in the army and he's A-1 in my heart.<sup>109</sup>

All these songs put the war in boy-girl terms. The exception was Irving Berlin's This Is the Army. This all-soldier show, written and produced by Berlin was his single greatest effort of the war. Just as he had in World War I, Berlin convinced the Army that the soldiers needed entertainment in camp, and the Pentagon assigned him a barracks room at Camp Upton, New Jersey. Here he lived and observed daily camp life while he gathered material for

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<sup>109</sup>Redd Evans, "He's 1-A in the Army and A-1 in My Heart," (New York: Valiant Music Company, 1941).



his acts, sketches, and songs. This Is the Army opened 2 July 1942 on Broadway with a cast of three hundred uniformed soldiers, all amateurs. The show told the story of army life in song and dance with a great deal of comedy. This Is the Army was entertainment, pure and simple. Berlin evaded any war ideology nor were fighting or battle scenes ever addressed. Army camp life was depicted with boyish humor, and songs were either humorous or slightly sentimental with girls, sweethearts, and mothers as the main topics. The impression of Army life that passed over the footlights to the audience was that military service was more like a summer camp vacation and not the serious business of preparing for war. Songs that made their way onto the airwaves from the show were, as mentioned earlier: "This Is the Army, Mister Jones," "The Army's Made a Man Out of Me," "I Left My Heart at the Stage Door Canteen," and "I'm Getting Tired So I Can Sleep." But the most popular song from the show featured Irving Berlin, in his World War I uniform, singing "Oh, How I Hate to Get Up in the Morning," (revived from his World War I soldier show Yip, Yip, Yaphank).<sup>110</sup> This Is the Army proved to be so popular that its initial four-week run was extended to twelve weeks and then a national tour was added, followed by a

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<sup>110</sup>Ewen, All the Years, 430.

tour of the European, Far East, and Pacific theaters of war. The show grossed \$2,000,000 from its U.S. tour and \$1,200,000 from the British Market. It was also made into a movie by Warner Brothers (grossing \$7,500,000).<sup>111</sup> Berlin was quick to insert new songs into the show, depending on the audience to which it was playing. For example, in England he added "My British Buddy," in the Pacific he composed "Heaven Watch the Philippines," and for the Womens 'Army Corps and Red Cross nurses he wrote "Oh, for a Dress Again." Just before leaving the Philippines, Berlin introduced another new song just for the soldiers in the Pacific, "Oh, to Be Home Again." When This Is the Army finally closed on October 22, 1945, it had earned more than \$10 million for the Army Relief Fund.<sup>112</sup>

This Is the Army proved to be an exception to the usual skepticism and sometimes outright hostility faced by the entertainment business from some members of Congress who were not convinced that music and theater were essential to winning the war. Speaking in defense of show business, Representative

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<sup>111</sup>Abel Green, "Irving Berlin Winds up 3-Year Hitch in 'Army,' Nets AER \$10,000,000," Variety 18 April 1945, vol. 158, no. 6: 1

<sup>112</sup>*Ibid.*

Emmanuel Celler of New York, said, "It [This Is the Army] is a sheer pageantry of patriotism. . . . You are lifted out of your seat with enthusiasm. You feel like throwing your loving arms around our army. Do not fail to see it. It is a great gloom antidote." He also suggested that music and the theater were the "greatest vehicle for bolstering up public morale."<sup>113</sup> The fact that Representative Celler's district included New York City might possibly have colored his intense enthusiasm, but the final tabulation of the profits from the stage productions and the motion picture indicate that Congressman Celler was not alone in his positive assessment of This Is the Army.

Another group of songs celebrated the advent of American women into the armed services. On 12 May 1942, the U.S. Congress passed the bill forming the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps, and the American public saw an unfamiliar sight: women outfitted in military uniforms which, prior to this, were traditionally a symbol of masculinity. "Although women were used by the armed forces only in noncombat roles, persuading the American public that the Corps was a hard-working organization, composed of sensible women whose contributions to the war effort were valid, was

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<sup>113</sup>Representative Emmanuel Celler, in the Congressional Record, vol. 88, pt. 1, 7 July 1942: 6035-6036.

indeed a difficult task."<sup>114</sup> There were numerous songs to commemorate the occasion of women in the military: "Tillie the Toiler (The WAAC)," "The Girl of the Year Is a SPAR,"<sup>115</sup> and numerous other "service" songs. There were songs to induce women to enlist in the military by assuring them that they would still be feminine and still be doing what had traditionally been "women's work":

Where is a woman's place in this war--  
 How can she help to win it?  
 Everyone knows what the fight is for,  
 And everyone of us should be in it.  
 We've no right  
 To let our conscience sleep.  
 Men must fight  
 But women needn't stand aside and weep.  
 A Woman's Place is where she's needed,  
 And believe me, she is needed right away.  
 To smooth a soldier's pillow,  
 To soothe his fevered brow,  
 To take a Nurse's place when she's learned how.  
 So join the ranks of those who've heeded  
 If you care to do your share throughout the war

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<sup>114</sup>Kathleen E.R. Smith, Lieutenant Colonel Emily U. Miller, a Biography, (Natchitoches, LA: Northwestern State University of Louisiana Press, 1984), 12.

<sup>115</sup>SPAR was the name given to Women Reserves of the United States Coast Guard Reserve, created 22 Nov. 1942--taken from the Coast Guard motto "Semper Paratus." Education for Victory, 15 January 1943: 27.

A Woman's Place is where she's needed,  
 And she's needed in the Cadet Nurse Corps.  
 So step up Mary, Jane and Sue!  
 Here's a uniform for you.  
 Here's the chance for all of you to roam  
 A Woman's Place is no longer in the home.  
 Now here's a chance to do a job--  
 Roll a bandage, use a swab--  
 Pass a scalpel, hand the probe,  
 Nurses needed 'round the globe.  
 Who is going to take their place?  
 Someone has to take their place  
 That's the problem you must face!  
 A Woman's Place is where she's needed,  
 And she's needed in the Cadet Nurse Corps.<sup>116</sup>

The most popular of the Soldier Boy songs were those "jumpin'" numbers like "GI Jive," and "The Boogie-Woogie Bugle Boy of Company B." While "Boogie-Woogie Bugle Boy" was a standard Hollywood production number, made famous by the Andrews Sisters, Johnny Mercer's "GI Jive" had a fast-driving syncopation and clever lyrics, laced with GI slang that informed the listener, "This is the G.I. Jive/Man, alive." The song described army drills as "make with the feet," and army protocol for privates as "Your

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<sup>116</sup>Irvin Graham and Robert Sour, "A Woman's Place,"(New York: Chappell, 1943).

duty/Is to salute the L-I-E-U-T."<sup>117</sup> The tunes jumped all over the scale and had enough jazz and "jive" in it to make weary GIs smile.

By 1943, time and experience made the Soldier Boy songs give way to the Fighting Man songs, like the "Ballad of Roger Young," "Comin' in on a Wing and a Prayer," "A Guy 24 in a B-29," "Johnny Got a Zero" (in which schoolboys' jeers at a poor student are thrown back into their faces when he enlists in the Air Corps and shoots down a Japanese Zero), "War Is Hell!" "Many Miles Away," "Old Glory and Her Boys," "Bombardiers of Uncle Sam," and "The U.S.A. by Day and the R.A.F. at Night," which was unique as the first song ever written about a bombing pattern.<sup>118</sup> "Comin' In on a Wing and a Prayer" had much in common with "Remember Pearl Harbor." In one recording by the male voices of the Golden Gate Quartet, the song was performed in the African-American spiritual style. This hymn-like quality accented a simple melody and a standard 4/4 rhythm pattern. The chorus of the song was repeated several times and the lyric told a story. It was easy for a listener to remember after one or two hearings:

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<sup>117</sup>Johnny Mercer, "G.I. Jive," (New York, Michael H. Goldsen, Inc., 1943).

<sup>118</sup>"U.S. Popular Music Collection, 1941-1945," Library of Congress.

Comin' in on a wing and a prayer,  
 We're comin' in on a wing and a prayer.  
 Oh, there's one motor gone,  
 But we still can carry on,  
 Comin' in on a wing and a prayer.  
 What a show! What a fight!  
 Yes, we really hit our target for tonight.  
 How we sing as we limp through the air,  
 Look below, there's our field over there,  
 With our full crew aboard and our trust in the Lord,  
 We're comin' in on a wing and a prayer.  
 One of our planes was missin'  
 Two hours overdue,  
 One of our planes was missin'  
 With all its gallant crew,  
 The radio set was hummin'  
 They were waitin' for a word,  
 Then a voice broke through the hummin'  
 And this is what they heard:  
 We're comin' in on a wing and a prayer,  
 Comin' in on a wing and a prayer,  
 Though there's one motor gone,  
 We still can carry on,  
 Comin' in on a wing and a prayer.<sup>119</sup>

In the wake of the success of "Don't Sit Under the Apple Tree" came "Three Little Sisters," in which three sisters vow to be true to their boy friends in three branches of service. Another tune that reassured the absent GI of his sweetheart's faithfulness was "My Yankee Doodle Boy Can Count on Me." "I Came Here to Talk for Joe"

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<sup>119</sup>Harold Adamson and Jimmy McHugh, "Comin' In on a Wing and a Prayer," (New York: Robbins Music Corp., 1943).

was the old Miles Standish situation in which an absent GI sends his buddy to plead his case and tell his girl how much he loves her. Out of step with the other songs of this period were "Johnny Doughboy Found a Rose in Ireland" and "Somebody Else Is Taking My Place," with implications that the American GI could be drawn to foreign girls or even worse, might find somebody else taking his place back home:

Somebody else is taking my place;  
 Somebody else now shares your embrace.  
 While I am trying to keep from crying,  
 You go around with a smile on your face.  
 Little you care for vows that you made;  
 Little you care how much I have paid.  
 My heart is aching; My heart is breaking,  
 For somebody's taking my place.<sup>120</sup>

These songs were aberrations. The trend was songs of dialogue between the Soldier Boy and the Girl Back Home. Following Pearl Harbor, the Soldier Boy would tell his girl not to sit under the apple tree or would vow "I'm in Love with the Girl I Left Behind Me," and he would tell her to "Stick to Your Knittin', Kitten," or "Be Brave, My Beloved." Then he was awarded his aviator wings, while the girl

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<sup>120</sup>Dick Howard, Russ Morgan and Bob Ellsworth, "Somebody Else Is Taking My Place," (New York: Shapiro, Bernstein & Co., 1937). Although published in 1937, this song was revived and eventually became Number One on Your Hit Parade in 1942.



looked on adoringly, and went overseas to the song, "He Wears a Pair of Silver Wings:"

It was just a simple love affair,  
Two people met, they learned to care  
And found themselves in Heaven  
To you maybe the story's nothing new,  
To me it's all my wildest dreams come true:  
Altho' some people say he's just a crazy guy  
To me he means a million other things.  
For me he's the one who taught  
This happy heart of mine to fly,  
HE WEARS A PAIR OF SILVER WINGS.  
And tho' it's pretty tough,  
The job he does above,  
I wouldn't have him change it for a king's.  
An ordinary fellow in the uniform I love,  
HE WEARS A PAIR OF SILVER WINGS.<sup>121</sup>

Strangely, except for an occasional Japanese Zero he shot down, the soldier was rarely heard from again, at least in song. In any case, he rarely wrote and left the poor girl at home to suffer the pangs of loneliness: "I'll Pray for You," "I'll Be a Good Soldier, Too," "I'll Keep the Love-Light Burning," and "My Devotion." But the most popular of this group were: "Always in My Heart," "I'll Wait for You," "Miss You," and "I'll Never Smile Again," a revival of a 1941 Frank Sinatra hit originally published in 1939 and written by Ruth Lowe.

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<sup>121</sup>Eric Maschwitz and Michael Carr, "He Wears a Pair of Silver Wings," (New York: Shapiro, Bernstein & Co., 1941).

In the 1943 song by Frank Loesser and Arthur Schwartz, "They're Either Too Young or Too Old," the girl reassures her soldier that no matter where his duty takes him, whether to India, Egypt, Australia, or Russia, she won't sit under the apple tree with another man. She says, "There is no secret lover/That the draft board didn't discover." It could also work a reminder to men not to shirk their military duty because, "What's good is in the army/What's left will never harm me."<sup>122</sup>

In late 1942 and in 1943 the songs of loneliness began to take on a tone of frustration (yet the girl was still loyal to the soldier), as in Bob Russells' lyric for the Duke Ellington tune "Don't Get Around Much Anymore." The girl in this song has been invited on dates and says (as if in a letter to her service man) . . . "Been invited on dates/Could have gone, but what for?/Awf'ully diff'rent without you/Don't get around much anymore."<sup>123</sup> Similar sentiments were found in such hit songs as "You'll Never Know (just how much I miss you)," "No Love, No Nuthin' (until my baby comes home)," "Saturday Night Is the Loneliest Night of the Week (cause

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<sup>122</sup>Frank Loesser and Arthur Schwartz, "They're Either Too Young or Too Old," (New York: M. Witmark & Sons, 1943).

<sup>123</sup>Bob Russell and Duke Ellington, "Don't Get Around Much Any More," (New York: Robbins Music Corp., 1942).

that's the time when my baby and I used to dance cheek to cheek)," "A Little on the Lonely Side," "I Don't Want to Walk Without You,"<sup>124</sup> and probably the most popular of this group, "I'll Walk Alone (because to tell you the truth I am lonely)." This song led the Hit Parade eight times in 1944.<sup>125</sup> Dinah Shore introduced "I'll Walk Alone" in the 1944 film Follow the Boys. Written by Jule Styne and Sammy Cahn, it was nominated for an Academy Award in 1944 but lost to "Swingin' on a Star."<sup>126</sup> It was one of the definitive love songs of World War II, expressing the mood of the nation as well as any other tune of the era:

They call, no date,  
I promised you I'd wait.  
I want them all to know,  
I'm strictly single--o.

I'll walk alone  
Because to tell you the truth,  
I'll be lonely.  
I don't mind being lonely  
When my heart tells me you

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<sup>124</sup>"U.S. Popular Music Collection, 1941-1945," Library of Congress.

<sup>125</sup>Don Tyler, Hit Parade, 1920-1955, (New York: Quill, 1985), 115.

<sup>126</sup>Nat Shapiro, ed., Popular Music: An Annotated Index of American Popular Songs, Volume 2, 1940-1949, (New York: Adrian Press, 1964), 137.

Are lonely too.  
 I'll always be near you,  
 Wherever you are,  
 Each night, in ev'ry prayer.  
 If you call I'll hear you,  
 No matter how far;  
 Just close your eyes  
 And I'll be there.  
 Please walk alone  
 And send your love  
 And your kisses to guide me.  
 Till you're walking beside me,  
 I'll walk alone.<sup>127</sup>

There were some risqué songs written during this period, but most of them were parodies by soldiers or originated in the movies, since any song that even whispered of impropriety or alcohol would not be given air time on the radio networks. There was "You Can't Say No to a Soldier," "He Loved Me Till the All-Clear Came," "Love Isn't Born, It's Made," and "I'm Doin' It for Defense."<sup>128</sup> The last song was sung by Betty Hutton to a car-load of sailors in the movie Star Spangled Rhythm, and its lyric is typical of the slightly suggestive wartime songs generated by Tin Pan Alley songwriters when they were not constrained by radio's censorship:

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<sup>127</sup>Sammy Cahn and Jule Styne, "I'll Walk Alone," (New York: Morley Music Co., Inc., 1944).

<sup>128</sup>"U.S. Popular Music Catalog, 1941-1945," Library of Congress.

Mr. Jones, get this right,  
 I'm your date for tonight,  
 For when I hold you tight,  
 I'm doin' it for defense,  
 Months and months of Cupid's drills,  
 Now it's time you were thrilled,  
 Start from here then we build  
 I'm doin' it for defense.  
 If you touch my lips and you feel me respondin'  
 Just cause I can't afford a bond  
 If you think you're daring, then brother relax,  
 You're just a rebate on my income tax.  
 Don't get hurt, don't get sore,  
 I'm a pal, nothin' more,  
 This ain't love this is war,  
 I'm doing it for defense.  
 Once I start, I can't quit,  
 I said I'd do my bit  
 So it's sad, but you're it  
 I'm doin' it for defense.<sup>129</sup>

In a category defined not only by its provocative lyric but also by the performance of its author was Sophie Tucker's "The Bigger the Army and Navy Is, the Better the Lovin' Will Be." Sung by the "Last of the Red Hot Mamas," [Sophie Tucker] to a packed grandstand of sailors at the Naval Training Center in San Diego, California, in the movie Follow the Boys, the song suggested that once a man put on a military uniform he became a fighter and a lover:

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<sup>129</sup>Johnny Mercer and Harold Arlen, "I'm Doin' It for Defense," (New York: Famous Music Corp., 1942).

Like every other Yank, my lucky stars I thank,  
 That I can always see the sunny side of life.  
 Boys are marching off to camps,  
 Sweethearts are being left behind.  
 But I say to the girls, "Cheer up, Girls!"  
 And keep this thought in mind:

The bigger the Army and Navy is,  
 The better the lovin' will be.  
 The women who went through the last war  
 Know what I mean.  
 We're getting thrills we haven't had,  
 Since 1918.  
 With millions of soldiers and sailors,  
 There's a difference you must agree.  
 I know they're perfect gentlemen,  
 Discreet in every way.  
 They get into a uniform,  
 And it's Bang! Bang! Right away!  
 The bigger the Army and the Navy,  
 The better the lovin' will be.  
 And it's gonna' be perfect for me.<sup>130</sup>

These songs looked at another side of the faithfulness vows. They said it was all right for a girl to bestow her favors, as long as she was doing it out of patriotism. None of these songs had wide popularity, and even though their lyrics were pure on the surface, people were certainly aware of their concealed meaning--for example, "If he's physically 1-A/Don't you be socially 4-F."

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<sup>130</sup>Sophie Tucker, "The Bigger the Army and the Navy (Is the Better the Lovin' Will Be)," (New York: Shapiro, Bernstein & Co., Inc., 1944).

Because radio's standards were even stricter than Hollywood's, anything even remotely suggestive could not get broadcast. "Hell" or "damn" were beyond the boundaries of radio. The hillbilly tune "Pistol Packin' Mama" became a national hit but not before it was laundered considerably to be sung on Your Hit Parade. It would not do, the radio censors said, for the man in the song to be "drinkin' beer in a cabaret;" he had to be "singing songs" (the ban on mentioning alcoholic beverages on the air was even applied to song lyrics). Likewise, "Rum and Coca-Cola," a big hit for the Andrews Sisters, became "Lime and Coca-Cola" on the air. Even the cause of "Mama's" wielding her pistol had to be changed. The fact that "Papa" was dancing with a blonde was unacceptable. The lyrics had to be changed to avoid any hint of adultery. According to Bill C. Malone in Country Music U.S.A., many songs of the forties had popular appeal, but few were as "commercially successful" as "Pistol Packin' Mama."<sup>131</sup> Written by former honky-tonk proprietor Al Dexter and released on Okeh Records in March 1943, it tells of a gun-toting woman who chases her husband's girlfriend out of a bar. The song had a lively, rollicking tune, and was even recorded by Bing Crosby and the Andrews Sisters in September 1943. "Pistol

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<sup>131</sup>Bill C. Malone, Country Music, U.S.A., Revised Edition, (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1985), 196.

"Packin' Mama" sold over a million copies in six months.<sup>132</sup> It was, by sales alone, one of the two or three most popular songs of the war period. As an example of its popularity, The Billboard column "Music in the News," 30 October 1943, relates the story of a New York City kindergarten teacher leading her class in song on the first day of school with numbers such as "God Bless America" and "Onward Christian Soldiers." When she asked for requests from the class, the children cried out, "Pistol Packin' Mama"! And they sang it.<sup>133</sup> Despite the song's popularity, it did not appear on the Lucky Strike Hit Parade until October 1943. LIFE magazine speculates that this may have been because the sponsor disliked the song or because Frank Sinatra, the show's star vocalist, could not sing the hillbilly song. LIFE called "Pistol Packin' Mama" . . . "a national scourge," saying the song was "naive, folksy and almost completely devoid of meaning," and a "national earache."<sup>134</sup> It was the first song recorded by Decca Records after the company reached an

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<sup>132</sup>"'Pistol' in Black Market Demand," Variety, 15 Sept. 1943, vol. 152, no. 1: 45.

<sup>133</sup>"Music in the News," The Billboard, 30 Oct. 1943, vol. 55, no. 44: 62.

<sup>134</sup>"Pistol Packin' Mama," LIFE, 13 Oct. 1942: 43.



agreement to end Decca's portion of the strike by James C. Petrillo and the American Federation of Musicians. An editorial in the Charlotte (NC) Observer wondered if this song was the most popular one born out of the crisis of war: "[Do]We have a country worth saving or a culture that is worth defending with the blood . . . of the best . . . of the land?"<sup>135</sup> The words of "Pistol Packin' Mama" are rather simplistic to have caused such a division in the music world, but the opinions of the critics did not much matter. The American people bought the records and the sheet music and made a huge success of the song:

Drinkin' beer in a cabaret,  
And was I havin' fun!  
Until one night she caught me right,  
And now I'm on the run.

Lay that pistol down, Babe.  
Lay that pistol down,  
Pistol Packin' Mama,  
Lay that pistol down!

She kicked out my windshield,  
She hit me over the head,  
She cussed and cried, and said I'd lied,  
And wished that I were dead.

Drinkin' beer in a cabaret,  
And dancin' with a blonde,

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<sup>135</sup>Charlotte(NC) Observer, quoted in "Music in the News," The Billboard, 13 Nov. 1943, vol. 55, no. 46: 62.

Until one night she shot out the light--  
Bang! That blonde was gone.<sup>136</sup>

The war experience, for both military and civilian alike, was instrumental in exposing a new generation of potential fans to country music. When men left their homes in the South for military bases elsewhere in the United States or in other parts of the world, they took their music, what would come to be known as "country and western" with them. Civilians looking for jobs and better lives for their families poured out of the South in to industrial centers in the Midwest and West Coast. These people also brought their love of hillbilly music with them. These transplanted Southerners requested their music were in juke boxes and dance halls. Through this shifting of the population, a regional music form, country music, became a national phenomenon. It introduced Americans to Roy Acuff, Ernest Tubb, Al Dexter, and other musicians of the new country and western style. By the final months of the war, country music was so widespread and recognized as American music that the Japanese included country music in their list of American institutions to insult over the loudspeaker systems they maintained around the Pacific. Nightly, American servicemen

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<sup>136</sup>Al Dexter, "Pistol Packin' Mama," (Santa Monica, CA: Vogue Music, Inc., 1943).

would hear anti-American broadcasts with such invectives as: "To hell with Franklin D. Roosevelt! To hell with Babe Ruth! To hell with Roy Acuff!"<sup>137</sup>

Songs from country artists were not the only ones that had to be modified in order to pass the radio network censors' standards. As mentioned before, "Rum and Coca-Cola," recorded by the Andrews Sisters, also had to be rewritten. The song was imported from Trinidad and banned on many radio networks, which argued that it gave free advertising for both of the products mentioned in the title.<sup>138</sup> The calypso tune was supposedly discovered by Morey Amsterdam and recorded in the United States, eventually making the Your Hit Parade. This was not without some objection from a Trinidad native, Rupert Grant, who claimed to have copyrighted the original words, set to the tune of a Creole lullaby. He claimed the original words satirized the American soldiers' occupation of the island: "Both the mothers and the daughters/Working for the Yankee dollars"--referred to local women selling themselves to American

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<sup>137</sup>Bob Millard, Country Music: 70 Years of America's Favorite Music, (New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 1993), 56.

<sup>138</sup>"Decca 'Rum & Coke' May Be Co.'s Biggest Seller Despite Net Ban," Variety, 14 Feb. 1945, vol. 157, no. 10: 43

servicemen.<sup>139</sup> Whatever the case, the song was immensely popular and finally was heard over the airwaves as "Lime and Coca-Cola" before the networks banned any arrangement of the song with words. Occasionally instrumental version were allowed, but the majority of Americans put their nickels in jukeboxes or purchased the records or sheet music and enjoyed the uncensored version.<sup>140</sup>

Almost any song about sailors had ribald connotations; for example, "As Mabel Goes--So Goes the Navy," was forbidden by the Office of War Information. But "Bell Bottom Trousers" was sufficiently cleaned up and went on to make Your Hit Parade in 1945. Making up for lost time was the theme of songs as the war began to come to a close: "It's Been a Long, Long Time," "I'm Going to Love That Gal (like she's never been loved before)." Perry Como's

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<sup>139</sup>Charles Panati, Panati's Parade of Fads, Follies, and Manias: The Origins of Our Most Cherished Obsessions, (New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 1991), 228.

<sup>140</sup>"Decca 'Rum & Coke' May Be Co.'s Biggest Seller Despite Net Ban," Variety, 14 Feb 1945, vol. 57, no. 10: 43. "Rum and Coca-Cola" was the subject of a famous plagiarism case detailed in Louis Nizer's book My Life in Court (Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1961). The decision of the federal court was in favor of the plaintiff, music publisher Maurice Baron of Trinidad. For a financial settlement, Baron relinquished all future property rights and writer and publisher credits. Officially, the song is copyrighted by Morey Amsterdam, Jeri Sullivan, and Paul Baron for Leo Feist, Inc., music publishers, 1944.

interpretation of the latter made Variety comment, "None of his squealing admirers was under any apprehension as to what those lyrics suggested."<sup>141</sup> Sex had not been entirely removed from love songs; it had just gone underground.

When the lonely girls of 1944 had had enough of being brave at home and Victory Mail,<sup>142</sup> a new song cycle emerged--the Dream Songs. Songs with an emphasis on dreams were not new, but a new wave of them crested at the end of 1944 and into 1945. They had a simple plot: Love or happiness or contentment denied by the real or waking world was possible in a dream. Beginning with 1942s' "I'm Getting Tired So I Can Sleep" (actually a soldier dreaming of his girl), the dream became the popular meeting place:

I'm getting tired so I can sleep.  
I want to sleep so I can dream.  
I want to dream so I can be with you.<sup>143</sup>

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<sup>141</sup>Abel Green, "This Has Been the Year of Years for the Music Business," Variety, 9 Jan. 1946, vol. 161, no. 5: 245.

<sup>142</sup>Victory Mail or V-Mail was the name given soldiers' photocopied letters, reduced in size to expedite mail to and from service men. A. Marjorie Taylor, compiler, The Language of World War II: Abbreviations, Captions, Quotations, Slogans, Titles, and Other Terms and Phrases, (New York: H.W. Wilson Company, 1948), 207.

<sup>143</sup>Irving Berlin, "I'm Getting Tired So I Can Sleep," (New York: Irving Berlin Music Corp, 1942).

The following year brought "I Had the Craziest Dream" ("There you were in love with me/When I'm awake such a break never happens")<sup>144</sup> and "Thanks for the Dream" ("Thanks for the dream, it was sweet/There were your arms wrapped around me. . . .Then I awoke, calling your name/Crying for you, wondering who put out the flame"); 1944 saw the popularity of "Long Ago and Far Away" and "I'm Making Believe." In 1945 there were "I Dream of You," "I'll Buy That Dream," "Sweet Dreams Sweetheart," "My Dreams Are Getting Better All the Time," "What's Your Favorite Dream?"<sup>145</sup> and "Linda:"

When I go to sleep  
I never count sheep  
I count all the charms about Linda  
And lately it seems  
In all of my dreams  
I just put my arms about Linda.<sup>146</sup>

There was also "Laura," (1945): "That was Laura, but she's only a dream." And perhaps the most popular one of all (five times on

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<sup>144</sup>Mack Gordon and Harry Warrens, "I Had the Craziest Dream," (New York: Bregman, Vocco & Conn, Inc., 1942).

<sup>145</sup>"U.S. Popular Music Collection, 1941-1945," Library of Congress.

<sup>146</sup>Jack Lawrence, "Linda," (New York: Warock Music Inc., 1946). This song did not become a best seller until 1947.

the Your Hit Parade): "Dream," which was published in 1944 but not on the best-seller lists until 1945. The last was blatant fantasy; no longer did the dream provide comfort by supplying an absent or languid loved one. It was total narcotic as can be seen from the lyrics of Johnny Mercer's "Dream," which told listeners dreaming was "the thing to do" because when one did dream "things never are" as "bad as they seem." The song also relied on dreams to help people find their "share of memories."<sup>147</sup>

Expressing the kindred emotions of war-weariness and happiness at the prospect of returning to a normal life were a group of Homecoming and Victory songs that began to appear in early 1945. Some of the titles that did not make it to the Your Hit Parade were: "Victory Day," "Darkness Comes to Light Again," "Victory Call," "You're Coming Home," "From the Arms of War to the Arms of Love," "Put Your Guns at Rest Soldier Boy," "Thanks, Soldier Boy," "The Lights Are on Again," "When Peace Has Come Again," "Victory," "They're Home Again," "Veterans on Parade," and "We've Won the War."<sup>148</sup>

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<sup>147</sup>Johnny Mercer, "Dream," (New York: Michael H. Goldsen, Inc., 1944).

<sup>148</sup>"U.S. Popular Music Collection, 1941-1945," Library of Congress.

The trend of nostalgic longing for a rosy peacetime actually began in 1941, before the United States entered the war, with Nat Burton and Walter Kent's ballad "(There'll Be Blues Birds Over) The White Cliffs of Dover":

I'll never forget those people I met  
Braving those angry skies  
I remember well as the shadows fell  
The light of hope in their eyes  
And though I'm far away  
I still can hear them say  
"Thumbs Up!"  
For when the dawn comes up:

There'll be bluebirds over  
The white cliffs of Dover  
Tomorrow, just you wait and see  
There'll be love and laughter  
And peace ever after  
Tomorrow when the world is free  
The shepherd will tend his sheep  
The valley will bloom again  
And Jimmy will go to sleep  
In his own little room again  
There'll be bluebirds over  
The white cliffs of Dover  
Tomorrow just you wait and see.<sup>149</sup>

The trend continued in 1942 with "When the Lights Go on Again (All Over the World)." But, as previously stated, the

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<sup>149</sup>Nat Burton and Walter Kent, "(There'll Be Bluebirds Over) The White Cliffs of Dover," (New York: Shapiro, Bernstein & Company, 1941).



officials at the Office of War Information discouraged such songs as dangerous to the war effort, and composers and publishers let these songs fade from the popular music charts.<sup>150</sup> The songwriters were soon back with more rousing, if less sentimental, numbers such as 1944s' "Vict'ry Polka " and "Hot Time in the Town of Berlin," (1943) a swing tune given peppy performances by various artists such as Glenn Miller, Bing Crosby, Frank Sinatra, and the Andrews Sisters. There were reminders of two previous American wars in the song lyric. The first was the title itself, a variation of the song most closely identified with the Spanish-American War: "Hot Time in the Old Time Tonight," and the second is an illusion to a World War I tune, "How You Gonna' Keep Them Down on the Farm, After They've Seen Paree?" "Hot Time in the Town of Berlin" was full of American bravado and good humor, with an ending in homage of "Der Fuehrer's Face":

There'll be a hot time in the town of Berlin  
 When the Yanks go marching in.  
 I want to be there, boy,  
 To spread some joy,  
 When they take old Berlin.

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<sup>150</sup>OWI: RG 208; Records of the Deputy Chief, New York: SG 169, WNRC.

There'll be a hot time in the town of Berlin  
 When the Yanks go marching in.  
 When the Brooklyn boys begin,  
 To take the joint apart and tear it down.  
 They're gonna' start a row and show 'em how  
 We paint the town back in Kokomo.  
 They're gonna' take a hike through Hitler's Reich  
 And change the "Heil" to "What ya know, Joe?"  
 There'll be a hot time in the town of Berlin  
 When the Yanks go marching in.  
 Well, how you gonna keep 'em down on the farm  
 After they take Berlin?  
 Poor Adolph!  
 When they take old Berlin.  
 Sweet Hitler!  
 After they take Berlin.  
 Poor Goering!  
 Oh, what a jubilee.  
 Gabby Goebbels  
 When they take old Berlin,  
 We'll go "Heil! Heil!"  
 Right in Der Fuehrer's Face!<sup>151</sup>

"Vict'ry Polka", of 1944, was a war song in name only but still considered a rousing attempt to cheer Americans and remind them that victory was at hand as the war neared its conclusion. One of the most successful of the 1945 Homecoming songs was by Sammy Cahn and Jule Styne. As recorded by Harry James, the most popular trumpet player of the day, "It's Been a Long, Long Time" spoke to

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<sup>151</sup>John De Vries and Joe Bushkin,"(There'll Be a) Hot Time in the Town of Berlin (When the Yanks Go Marching In), (New York: Barton Music Corp., 1943).

parted lovers of the hope that the war would end soon and they would be reunited:

Kiss me once and kiss me twice  
 And kiss me once again  
 It's been a long, long time  
 Haven't felt like this my dear  
 Since can't remember when  
 It's been a long, long time  
 You'll never know how many dreams  
 I dreamed about you  
 Or just how empty they all seemed without you  
 So, kiss me once and kiss me twice  
 And kiss me once again  
 It's been a long, long time.<sup>152</sup>

Originally recorded in 1938, the most popular song of 1944, and also a Homecoming song on a more tentative note, was the haunting "I'll Be Seeing You." It, too, seemed apropos for the soldier and his girlfriend:

Cathedral bells were tolling,  
 And our hearts sang on.  
 Was it the spell of Paris,  
 Or the April dawn?  
 Who knows when we shall meet again,  
 But when the morning chimes ring sweet again:

I'll be seeing you  
 In all the old familiar places  
 That this heart of mine embraces  
 All day through.  
 In that small cafe,

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<sup>152</sup>Sammy Cahn and Jule Styne, "It's Been a Long, Long Time," (New York: Morley Music Co., Inc., 1945).

The park across the way  
The children's carousel,  
The chestnut tree, the wishing well.  
I'll be seeing you in every lovely summer's day  
In everything that's light and gay  
I'll always think of you that way.  
I'll find you in the morning mist  
And when the day is through  
I'll be looking at the moon  
But I'll be seeing you.<sup>153</sup>

Although the lyrics of "I'll Be Seeing You" did not actually stress wartime separation, this song, like so many of the sentimental love songs of the period, held a tantalizing promise of future reunification. "I'll Be Seeing You" is symbolic of the love songs of the war years. Men and women listeners could read their own situations into the words of love ballads and even though the songs' lyrics did not mention the war, because the song was popular during wartime, it became a war song. The images of small-town life and of simple everyday places and things, "the park, the wishing well," came together in this song to present a nostalgic look at the recent past and to look forward to a future day when the lovers would once again share these ordinary things. The lovers also began to be reunited temporarily through furloughs, as in "He's

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<sup>153</sup>Irving Kahal and Sammy Fain, "I'll Be Seeing You," (New York: Williamson Music Co., 1938).

Home for a Little While," "Back to My Country and You," and "Fellow on a Furlough." In the former the dream song idea was merged with reality, as the song exhorted the girl to be nice to the lonely GI who had been dreaming of a girl just like her: "He's just a fellow on furlough, out looking for a dream," so she should do as the words of another song suggest and "Send Me Away with a Smile" and be sure to "Autograph Your Photograph" when a girl sits down to "Write to the Boys Over There." More songs of optimism and homecoming followed: "My Guy's Come Back," "If I Ever Get Back to America," "When I Get Back to My Home Town," "I'm Gonna' See My Baby," and "I'll Be Walking with My Honey Soon, Soon, Soon."<sup>154</sup>

In an unusual departure into political and social commentary, a 1945 song addressed a cautionary message to the new United Nations Organization meeting in San Francisco--"The World Must Have Peace" and "Don't Let It Happen Again:"<sup>155</sup>

When we round the final bend  
At the end of the scrappin,'  
DON'T LET IT HAPPEN AGAIN!  
Keep a light that never fails  
On the trails we'll be mappin'  
DON'T LET IT HAPPEN AGAIN!  
We'll be to blame if the flame

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<sup>154</sup>"U.S. Popular Music Collection, 1941-1945," Library of Congress.

<sup>155</sup>Ibid.

Should ever die out.  
 See that the eagle keeps an eagle eye out!  
 And when the great day comes  
 With the drums and the clappin',  
 Close with this mighty "Amen:"  
 DON'T LET IT HAPPEN AGAIN! <sup>156</sup>

But the general view of the postwar world was painted in glowing terms of prosperity and, most importantly for the rationed and restricted American homefront--material comforts: "There'll be strawberries floatin' in cream," as one song had it. In "Shoo Shoo Baby," another hit for the Andrews Sisters and Bing Crosby, a mother sings a swing lullaby to her baby, whose "papa's off to the seven seas," cajoling, "don't cry, baby," and promising that "when he gets back we'll lead a life of ease." The speaker is sorry that "papa's gotta be rough now," in leaving, but it is only "so he can be sweet to you," when he returns some day.<sup>157</sup>

The songwriters' view of a radiant future might have been shaped by their own wartime prosperity. The music business claimed a huge share of the increasing amount of money Americans

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<sup>156</sup>Henry Prichard, "Don't Let It Happen Again," (New York: Broadcast Music, Inc., 1945).

<sup>157</sup>Phil Moore, "Shoo-Shoo Baby," (New York: Leeds Music Corp., 1943).

spent on amusements during the war. With material goods rationed or completely unavailable, Americans spent their money on entertainment: movies, sheet music, records, and the theater. Sheet music sales were never better, often topping the 600,000 mark for a single tune--one rarely reached before this time. The American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers reported a twenty-five per cent increase in sales royalties in 1944 over the same period in 1943.<sup>158</sup> This prosperity occurred despite the fact that the record business was hurt by three events: (1) a ban on shellac, a prime ingredient in the 78 rpm's of the 1940s (it was considered a strategic material ); (2) a ban on the use of records for public performance (such as in juke boxes or on the radio) by the American Society of Composers, Authors, and Publishers (ASCAP); and (3) the American Federation of Musicians (AFM)'s ban on any new recordings using instruments.

Shellac was a primary ingredient in the materials used to press records before 1945. The main supply of shellac came from India, and shipments had been in jeopardy since the beginning of the war in Europe in 1939. Fortunately, American recording companies had large reserve supplies of shellac, and when the War Production

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<sup>158</sup>"ASCAP Coin Up, Also Sheet Sales," Variety 13 Dec. 1944, vol. 157, no. 1: 1.

Board cut allotments by forty percent, record production continued. Chemical engineers for Columbia Records were experimenting with substitute materials and other methods of diluting shellac. The smaller recording companies were more affected by shellac rationing than the large ones, but none of them went out of business for lack of materials with which to press records.<sup>159</sup>

The ASCAP strike, as it was known, lasted for ten months, from January 1941 until October 1941. Despite these obstacles, the record business soared.<sup>160</sup> The American Society of Composers, Authors, and Publishers held conflicting views with the national broadcasters over music licensing rights. When a five-year contract between ASCAP and the networks expired on 30 December 1940, ASCAP demanded \$9 million a year in royalty payments; this was twice the amount of the old contract.<sup>161</sup> The

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<sup>159</sup>"Wax Execs Optimistic Despite War; No Shortage Scares Yet, And Study of War Songs Is On," The Billboard, 20 Dec. 1941, vol. 53, no. 51: 9; "No Further Shellac Cuts for Disc Cos.," Variety, 7 July, 1943, vol. 151, no. 4: 44.

<sup>160</sup>"Big Biz Despite War, ASCAP Ban," Variety, 25 Aug. 1943, vol. 151, no. 11: 1.

<sup>161</sup>Charles Hamm, Yesterdays: Popular Song in America, (New York and London: W.W. Norton & Company, 1983), 389.



national broadcasters refused to pay and had already anticipated such a move from ASCAP by forming their own organization, Broadcast Music, Incorporated, on 14 October 1939. The new group, BMI, was a great deal weaker than ASCAP, which owned the rights to most music written and published in the United States since 1884. Exceptions were songs in the public domain and a small catalog of music owned by Selected Editions of Standard American Catalogues. On 1 January 1941, the broadcasters banned the use of all ASCAP material in favor of other licensing organizations.<sup>162</sup> Unfortunately, BMI had few songs in its holdings until Edward B. Marks, publisher of popular and Latin American music, joined the organization. Two other publishers with extensive hillbilly and country and western catalogs enlisted with BMI: Ralph Peer's Southern Music and M.M. Cole of Chicago. BMI gradually expanded its holdings until it had over thirty-six thousand works from fifty-two publishers.<sup>163</sup> ASCAP and the radio networks resolved their differences in October 1941, but BMI had grown strong enough to be a real competitor to ASCAP and would eventually be instrumental in breaking ASCAP's monopoly on Tin Pan Alley.

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<sup>162</sup>Malone, Country Music U.S.A., 178.

<sup>163</sup>*Ibid*, 179-180.

In less than a year, the music business was once again interrupted by a strike. This time it was James Caesar Petrillo and the American Federation of Musicians who were in conflict with the publishers and record companies. Petrillo argued that jukeboxes, estimated to be around 400,000 in number, were driving musicians out of work, and as a result, a fund should be set up to aid unemployed musicians. Petrillo, decided to blackmail the recording industry into paying higher fees to counteract the effect of records being played on the radio and jukeboxes. The recording companies refused and the musicians went on strike 1 August 1942. There would be no more recordings made by instrumentalists. Players of ukeleles and harmonicas were exempt--Petrillo did not consider these real instruments.<sup>164</sup> The record companies had tried to fill their vaults with round the clock recording sessions, but by mid-1943, the selection of new music was falling short of listeners' expectations. Singers, who were not members of the AFM, could still make records but without orchestral backing. And so, Americans heard some artfully arranged choral performances accompanying Bing Crosby and Dick Haymes and the acappella gospel harmonies of the Golden Gate Quartet. Even an appeal from

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<sup>164</sup>Ibid, 180.

President Roosevelt didn't sway Petrillo from his stand. Radio broadcasts, not intended for public sale or permanent preservation, weren't affected, and many more performances were preserved on unbreakable transcription discs by Armed Forces Radio Service. The American public heard new songs in movie and Broadway musicals and in live performances by the dance bands and orchestras, but these tunes were not available on record.<sup>165</sup>

The musicians' union did make one exception to the recording ban. James Petrillo lifted all sanctions against recording for servicemen. Under Colonel Howard C. Bronson and Major Harry Salter of the Special Services Division, the Army was given carte blanche to use AFM musicians for free. The first pressing was 50,000 records and proved to be so popular with the servicemen that within a year's time, 250,000 recordings were sent abroad each month. In isolated areas the records, made from the new material, Vinylite, along with portable hand-wound record players, were dropped by parachute, in specially packaged boxes. This unique series of phonograph records produced between the years 1943 and 1949 was known as V-Disks. Over eight million recordings of popular, jazz, country and western, and classical music were

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<sup>165</sup>"WLB Delving into AFM-Disc Battle," Variety, 28 July 1943, vol. 151, no. 7: 37.

distributed to the troops overseas. The music was divided according to category with about eighty percent of the pressings in the popular bracket and the remaining twenty percent apportioned between folk, hillbilly, "race," and semi-classical music. Recording artists included: Roy Acuff, Marian Anderson, the Andrews Sisters, Gene Autrey, Pearl Bailey, Louis Armstrong, Count Basie, Boston Pops Orchestra, Les Brown, Cab Calloway, Rosemary Clooney, Nat King Cole, Bing Crosby, Jimmy and Tommy Dorsey, Duke Ellington, Ella Fitzgerald, Eileen Ferrell, Benny Goodman, Woody Herman, Lena Horne, Harry James, Andre Kostelanetz, Kay Kyser, Johnny Mercer, Glenn Miller, NBC Symphony, Philadelphia Orchestra, Tex Ritter, Artie Shaw, Dinah Shore, Frank Sinatra, Voice of Firestone, Fats Waller, and Fred Waring.<sup>166</sup>

Although V-Disks were the brain-child of the Army, it was not long before the Navy, Marine Corps, and the Coast Guard saw how popular the Disks were. The other services negotiated with the Army to "borrow" the master recordings so that they could contract with regular commercial firms for pressing copies to send to their men. Eventually the Office of War Information and the Coordinator

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<sup>166</sup>Richard S. Sears, compiler, V-Discs: First Supplement, (New York: Greenwood Press, 1980), vi-vii, 223-270; Wanda Marvin, "V-Discs Help Hasten the Day," The Billboard 1944 Music Year Book, 30 Sept. 1944, vol. 56, no. 38: 148-149, 204-216.

of Intra-American Affairs would also gain access to the master recordings in order to press disks for use in entertaining servicemen. The one stipulation that the AFM placed on the V-Disk recordings was that all pressings, many containing unique, non-commercial recordings, were to be destroyed after the war or when the AFM strike was settled--whichever came first. Fortunately, these stipulations were ignored and some never-to-be replicated V-Disk recordings survived.<sup>167</sup>

Decca Records was the first company to capitulate to the American Federation of Musicians' strike. Its entire revenue came from popular music, and it felt the money crunch first. Faced with bankruptcy, Decca signed a new contract with the American Federation of Musicians in September 1943.<sup>168</sup> Its first new release after settling with the musicians' union was "Pistol Packin' Mama" as recorded by the Andrews Sisters and Bing Crosby. A year later in November 1944, Columbia and Victor Records settled with

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<sup>167</sup>ibid.

<sup>168</sup>"Announce Record Fees: Decca-AFM Agreement to Boost Supply of Records," The Billboard, 9 Oct. 1943, vol. 55, no. 41: 62.

the musicians' union.<sup>169</sup> The strike was a gift to many small recording companies who were able to sign with Petrillo and gain a place in the recording business when the giant firms were out of the picture. The newly formed Capitol Records, headed by Johnny Mercer, profited from the strike and gained a strong position in Los Angeles among the movie industry and also country and western artists who had discovered the West Coast.<sup>170</sup>

As a direct result of the ASCAP strike, and perhaps from a longing for a simpler time, revivals of older, previously recorded songs became the mainstay of radio broadcasts (aside from live performances) and some older songs had great popularity. "As Time Goes By" was resurrected for the movie Casablanca; "I'll Get By," written in 1928 by Roy Turk and Fred Ahlert, became the immortal love rhapsody of American's wartime lovers as well as Irene Dunn and Spencer Tracy in A Guy Named Joe:

I'll get by  
As long as I have you.  
Though there be rain  
And darkness too,  
I'll not complain,  
I'll see it through.

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<sup>169</sup>"Petrillo, AFM End Ban," Variety, 15 Nov. 1944, vol. 156, no. 11: 1.

<sup>170</sup>Malone, Country Music U.S.A., 181.

Though I may  
 Be far away,  
 It's true;  
 Say, what care I,  
 Dear, I'll get by  
 As long as I have you.<sup>171</sup>

Purely nonsense or fantasy songs had a certain appeal during the Second World War, although not as much as in the Great Depression of the 1930s. "The Hut Sut Song" was supposedly in Swedish lovers' talk; "Mairzy Doats" in baby talk; and "Chickery Chick" in gibberish. Each had its turn on Your Hit Parade. Cole Porter's "Don't Fence Me In," the big hit of 1945 from the film Hollywood Canteen, was another imitation cowboy song in which Porter attempted to cash in on the craze for the American West and the freedom it implied for the future when the soldier would return and fulfill his destiny in America-the-boundless. To men and women who had lived regimented lives in the armed forces or in war work on the homefront, the appeal of unlimited freedom in this song is understandable. They wanted "land, lots of land" and it should be "under starry skies above." They wanted to be "turn[ed] lose" to "ride through the wide open country." Americans were looking for freedom to resume their lives and to be with their

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<sup>171</sup>Roy Turk and Fred Ahlert, "I'll Get By (As Long as I Have You), (New York: Fred Ahlert Music Corp., 1928).

families, without the specter of war and the shadow it cast on all aspects of American life.<sup>172</sup>

The popularity of Latin American rhythms, sparked by bandleader Xavier Cugat in the 1930s, continued through the World War II years. Much of this popularity was a result of the ASCAP strike. Latin American composers were not members of ASCAP, so their music was outside the boundaries of the strike and could be recorded and played on the air.<sup>173</sup> Latin titles that sauntered through listeners' ears during the war included: "Tico Tico," "Amor," "Brazil," "Besame Mucho," "Frenesi," "Poinciana," and "Magic in the Moonlight." Late in the war, a dash of calypso added spice to the Latin rhythms in songs like "Sing a Tropical Song," "Rum and Coca-Cola," and "Come with Me My Honey."<sup>174</sup>

One musical genre that became a national phenomenon as a result of the population shifts during the war was hillbilly or country music. Before the 1930s, country music was exclusively a

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<sup>172</sup>Cole Porter, "Don't Fence Me In," (New York: Harms, Inc., 1944).

<sup>173</sup>Nat Shapiro, ed., Popular Music: An Annotated Index of American Popular Songs, Vol. 2, 1940-1949, (New York: Adrian Press, 1964), 8.

<sup>174</sup>"U.S. Popular Music Collection, 1941-1945," Library of Congress.



regional cultural form: dominant in the South and the Midwest.

When southern men and women moved into the armed services or to large population centers where defense industry jobs awaited them, they took the demand for their hillbilly music with them.

Recording companies, record producers, and booking agents were forced to acknowledge this newly empowered segment of the buying public. Country musicians were also pressured to conform their wildly divergent musical styles and often undisciplined performances into a package that would be more acceptable to the mainstream of American musical tastes.<sup>175</sup> The ASCAP strike was a blessing to country music; now artists and composers who had heretofore been shunned by major publishers were given opportunities to be recorded and heard nationally, most notably by members of the newly formed Broadcast Music Incorporated (BMI). Consistent nationwide commercial success eluded country music, but the stage was set for the future. With the exception of "There's a Star Spangled Banner Waving Somewhere" and "Pistol Packin' Mama," both of which made it to Your Hit Parade,<sup>176</sup> this

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<sup>175</sup>Malone, Country Music U.S.A., 152.

<sup>176</sup>Abel Green, "Popular Appeal Will Take Its Course Sans Any Synthetic Hypo," Variety 5 Jan. 1944, vol. 153, no. 4: 187.

multimillion-dollar business remained the territory of its 25,000,000 fans.

The war was a popular theme for country performers and songwriters. Patriotic songs and those with war-related themes made the first hillbilly music (or country and western, folk, or cowboy as it was sometimes labeled) popularity charts established by The Billboard. Country music was lumped in with cowboy tunes and "race" music--as African-American music (blues and jazz) was called because the statistics compilers at both The Billboard and Variety were unsure of the exact category in which to place this music or how long it would be popular. In February 1942 The Billboard placed hillbilly and country and western music in a category entitled "American Folk Music," where it remained throughout the war.<sup>177</sup> Unlike other composers and lyricists of music for popular consumption, country songwriters did not hesitate to write of the sufferings and death of soldiers or of the traumatic experiences of those left behind. By far the most popular song was Elton Britt's recording of a Paul Roberts and Shelby Darnell composition, "There's a Star Spangled Banner Waving

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<sup>177</sup>"American Folk Music," The Billboard, 7 Feb. 1942, vol. 54, no. 6: 64.

Somewhere." It tells the story of a crippled mountain boy who longs to "take the Axis down a peg:"

There's a Star Spangled Banner Waving Somewhere  
In a distant land so many miles away,  
Only Uncle Sam's great heroes get to go there,  
Where I wish that I could also live someday.  
I'd see Lincoln, Custer, Washington and Perry  
And Nathan Hale and Colin Kelley<sup>178</sup> too!  
There's a Star Spangled Banner Waving Somewhere  
Waving o'er the land of heroes brave and true.

In this war with its mad schemes of destruction,  
Of our country fair and our sweet liberty,  
By the mad dictators, leaders of corruption,  
Can't the U. S. use a mountain boy like me?  
God gave me the right to be a free American  
And for that precious right I'd gladly die,  
There's a Star Spangled Banner Waving Somewhere  
That is where I want to live when I die.

Tho I realize I am crippled that is true, sir!  
Please don't judge me courage by me twisted leg  
Let me show my Uncle Sam what I can do, sir!  
Let me help to bring the Axis down a peg.  
If I do some great deed I will be a hero,  
And a hero brave is what I want to be,

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<sup>178</sup>Captain Colin Kelly was a naval aviator who was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross posthumously for his bombing attack on a Japanese naval task force in the Philippines on 10 December 1941. His plane was hit and he died in the crash. There were conflicting stories concerning Kelly's actual deeds, but the national news media latched onto the story as positive note in a very dark time for Americans. Geoffrey Perrett, Days of Sadness, Years of Triumph: The American People 1939-1945, (Madison, WI: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1985), 207; Fussell, Wartime, 35-36.

There's a Star Spangled Banner Waving Somewhere  
In that heaven there should be a place for me.<sup>179</sup>

The record was popular with both hillbilly music fans and popular music followers. It told a sentimental story and linked past American heroes with a World War II hero, Captain Colin Kelly. It sold over a million-and-a-half copies and was recorded by popular artists.<sup>180</sup>

Other hillbilly songs expressed the outrage Americans felt at the treachery of the Japanese: "Cowards Over Pearl Harbor," by Roy Acuff and "Smoke on the Water," by Zeke Clements were two of the most successful of this type. Eddy Arnold sang, "I Don't Want to Be Buried at the Bottom of the Sea." There were also the usual love songs and those dealing with the anxieties of unfaithful love: "We'll Meet Again, Sweetheart" and "Have I Stayed Away Too Long?"<sup>181</sup>

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<sup>179</sup>Paul Roberts and Shelby Darnell, "There's a Star Spangled Banner Waving Somewhere," (New York: Bob Miller, Inc., Music Publishers, 1942).

<sup>180</sup>Abel Green, "Popular Appeal Will Take Its Course Sans Any Synthetic Hypo," Variety, 5 Jan. 1944, vol. 154, no. 4: 187.

<sup>181</sup>"U.S. Popular Music Collection, 1941-1945," Library of Congress.

Many hillbilly songs were poignant ones that dealt with the tragedies of war. For example, "Gold Star Window," sung by Tex Ritter, tells of the sacrifice of a mother--the loss of a soldier son signified by a small banner with a gold star that was hung in the front windows of homes of men who had died "to keep us free." There were also "Stars and Stripes on Iwo Jima," "White Cross on Okinawa," and "The Soldier's Last Letter" detailing the sacrifices of American servicemen. Another set of songs featured the tragedies of those at home who lost loved ones : "Teardrops in the Snow" tells of a mother's trip to the railroad depot to claim the coffin, "wrapped in red and white and blue," of her fallen soldier son. Another song, "Searching for a Soldier's Grave," follows an American abroad who is trying to locate the final resting place of a loved one.<sup>182</sup> These songs never made it to Your Hit Parade because country and western artists rarely made the transition to the popular music charts and also because popular music consumers were not interested in the realities of war.

Tin Pan Alley composers continued to turn out war-related songs. All the armed service branches were glorified in song several times over. The newly formed Army Air Corps flew "Off . . .

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<sup>182</sup>"U.S. Popular Music Collection, 1941-1945," Library of Congress.

in the wild, blue yonder," while old standards like The Marines' Hymn, Anchors Aweigh, and The Caissons Go Rolling Along enjoyed revivals of popularity. On the other hand, the songs about the homefront were not nearly as popular. "Co-operate with Your Air Raid Warden," and "He Loved Me Till the All Clear Came" were not as glamorous as songs about the men in uniform. Love was no longer as cheerful. Instead civilians were faced with songs about rationing, bureaucracy, shortages, and the black market,<sup>183</sup> for example: "Don't Put Me on a Ration of Love," "I Must Have Priorities on Your Love," "Who Needs Sugar, When I've Got Honey?" "I've Got Four Brand New Tires," "Ration Blues," and a naughty ditty about rationing and shortages by Thomas "Fats" Waller and George Marion, "I'll Be Happy When the Nylons Bloom Again":<sup>184</sup>

Gone are the days when I've answered the bell,  
 Fine wear salesmen with stockings to sell,  
 Gleam in his eye and measuring tape in his hand,  
 I get the urge to go splurging on hose,  
 Nylons--a dozen of those.  
 Now poor or rich, we're enduring instead,  
 Cruel ones that itch, rayons that spread.

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<sup>183</sup>Allen L. Woll, The Hollywood Musical Goes to War, (Chicago: Nelson-Hall, 1983), 70.

<sup>184</sup>"U.S. Popular Music Collection, 1941-1945," Library of Congress.

I'll be happy when the nylons bloom again,  
 Cotton is monotonous to mend,  
 Only way to keep affection fresh,  
 Get some mesh for your flesh.  
 I'll be happy when the nylons bloom again,  
 There's no need to blow no sirens then,  
 When those frozen hose appear,  
 Then it means all clear.  
 Working women of the USA and Britain,  
 Humble dowager or lowly debutante,  
 Will be happy as a puppy or a kitten,  
 Stepping back into their nylons of DuPont.  
 Keep on smiling 'til the nylons bloom again,  
 And the WACs come back to join their men,  
 In a world that Mr. Wallace<sup>185</sup> planned,  
 Strolling hand-in-hand.<sup>186</sup>

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<sup>185</sup>Henry A. Wallace, (1888-1965), newspaper editor, plant geneticists, founder of Pioneer Seed Co., Secretary of Agriculture (1933-1941), Vice-President, (1941-1945), was among the most controversial politicians of his time. He was a champion of soil conservation, public assistance to poor farmers--tenant and migrants, federal relief for urban poverty, dissolution of industrial monopolies, and civil rights for both black and white Americans. In May 1942 in a speech entitled "The Price of Free World Victory," Wallace took his stand for a vision of the future that would uplift the spirits of people everywhere. He directly contradicted Henry Luce's celebrated 1941 Life editorial, "The American Century,"--an Americanization of British imperialism in the mold of Kipling and Churchill. Wallace proposed that "the century on which we are entering--the century which will come out of this war--can and must be the century of the common man." John Morton Blum, V Was for Victory: Politics and American Culture During World War II (New York: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, Publishers, 1976), pp. 284-285.

<sup>186</sup>Thomas "Fats" Waller and George Marion, Jr., "When the Nylons Bloom Again," (New York: Robbins Music, Inc., 1943).

Other writers channeled their energies into patriotic and propaganda songs at the request of the newly formed Songwriters War Committee, one of many organizations formed during the war with the intent of encouraging American songwriters to aid the war effort through their compositions. Americans were invited to give their all to the war effort with songs such as "We Can, We Must, We Will" by Harold Gardner and Leland Brown's "The Way to Victory." Most of these morale boosting, propaganda songs were dashed off in a hurry and most were highly forgettable. Bond drives were the most popular subject and brought forth such sales pitches as: "One More Mile," "Swing the Quota," "Get Aboard the Bond Wagon," and "Unconditional Surrender." One song in particular, "Ev'rybody Ev'ry Payday," by Dick Uhl and Tom Adair, was singled out by the United States Treasury for a "super-doooper song plug drive." The Treasury's radio division made arrangements with 872 radio stations, 370,000 juke boxes, public schools, and phonograph companies to popularize "Ev'rybody Ev'ry Payday." This song was to induce Americans to enroll in a ten percent payroll deduction plan for the purchase of war bonds. The plan was to: 1) Distribute the song through music counters and stores, 2) Have special arrangements made for dance orchestras, 3) Dispense tunes for brass bands in schools to play the song, 4) Use in singing classes,



5) Distribute free transcriptions to radio stations, 6) Have special recordings of the song by Barry Wood for Victor, Guy Lombardo for Decca, and Tommy Tucker for Columbia.<sup>187</sup> Despite the message, the advertising, and the fact that it was free to anyone, the song did not become popular:

Ev'ryone can help to save the nation.  
 Ev'ryone can help to win the war.  
 There's no time for restin'  
 Let's begin investin'  
 In the things our country's fighting for.

Ev'rybody Ev'ry Payday,  
 Buy a Bond the U.S.A. way!  
 That's the job, it's up to you and me.  
 Butcher, baker, banker, scholar,  
 Take a dime from ev'ry dollar.  
 Ev'ryone pitch in for victory.  
 Ev'rybody Ev'ry Payday,  
 Ev'ry farmer, Ev'ry hay day  
 Top the crop with dimes for Uncle Sam.  
 Ten percent! That's the rent!  
 Ev'ryone can pay  
 For a home in the U.S.A.<sup>188</sup>

Scrap drives to collect used items made of metal, rubber, nylon and paper netted such songs as: "While Melting All Our Memories,"

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<sup>187</sup>"Elaborate Push for Its Theme," Variety, 19 Nov. 1942, vol. 147, no. 11: 37.

<sup>188</sup>Tom Adair and Dick Hull, "Ev'rybody Ev'ry Payday," (Washington, D.C., Henry Morgenthau, Jr., Secretary of the Treasury, 1942).

"Junk Ain't Junk No More (cause junk could win the war)," and another jaunty "Fats" Waller tune, "Cash for Your Trash":

Today is the day that all us cats  
Must surely do our bit.  
We've got to do our share,  
So Uncle Sam can hit.

Save up all your pots and pans,  
Save up every little thing you can,  
Don't give it away, no, no, no,  
Get some cash for your trash.  
Save up all your old newspapers,  
Save and pile them like a high skyscraper,  
Don't give them away, no, no, no,  
Get some cash for your trash.  
In between we'll do some lovin '   
Like the handsome turtle dove,  
And will you listen to me honey,  
Get plenty of folding money.  
Save up all your iron and tin,  
But when you go to turn it in,  
Don't give it away, no, no, no,  
Get some cash for your trash.  
Real Bonds!<sup>189</sup>

There were songs to encourage the planting of victory gardens :

"Get Out and Dig, Dig, Dig" and "Harvey the Victory Garden Man."

Other categories included a part for dogs in the war: "The K-9 Corps" and "I'd Like to Give My Dog to Uncle Sam." Propaganda songs

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<sup>189</sup>Thomas "Fats" Waller and Ed Kirkeby, "Cash for Your Trash," (New York: Robbins Music, Inc., 1942).

aimed at preventing gossip, panic, and the unknowing betrayal of American secrets were: "Rumor Man," "A Slip of the Lip Can Sink a Ship," and "Shhh! It's a Military Secret." Songs were composed to remind the homefront that theirs was an important job, too. "Knit One, Purl Two," "The Woman Behind the Man Behind the Gun," and "Fighting on the Home Front Wins" (The Official War Song of the American Housewife) were aimed at making those left at home feel important and vital to the war effort. Air raid drills were not left out. There was "When the Air Raid Siren Sounds," and "Cooperate with Your Air Raid Warden."<sup>190</sup> A song sponsored by the U.S. Treasury Department, "It's the Little Things That Count," was typical of the tunes aimed at the homefront and emphasized its importance in the war effort:

Two and two add up to four,  
 Four and four make eight;  
 You and you can win the war,  
 These figures indicate.  
 For it's not the large amount,  
 It's the little things that count!

CHORUS:  
 Don't forget, put out the light;  
 Last year's dress will look all right;  
 You can save while others fight--  
 It's the little things that count.

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<sup>190</sup>"U.S. Popular Music Collection, 1941-1945," Library of Congress.

Wear the hat you bought last spring,  
 Save your paper, wind up string,  
 Pick up pins,  
 Don't waste a thing--  
 It's the little things that count.  
 Just remember, Missus Doaks,  
 Little strokes fell great oaks;  
 That's no hoax,  
 Thrifty folks help to win the war!  
 Mend your stockings, sole your shoes;  
 Scraps of meat make tasty stews;  
 Do your part and you can't lose!  
 It's the little things that count!<sup>191</sup>

American popular music composers became a part of the diplomatic mission of the United States with such songs for our British allies as "Who Are the British?" and "My British Buddy." To cement Pan-American relationships there were "Hands Across the Border" and "Good Night Neighbor." The Soviet Union, now an ally of the United States, was praised with "And Russia Is Her Name," "Song of the Guerrillas," "You Can't Brush Off a Russian," "And Still the Volga Flows," and finally, "That Russian Winter."<sup>192</sup> None of these morale-builders or propaganda songs made it to Your Hit

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<sup>191</sup>Tom Adair and Dick Uhl, "It's the Little Things That Count!" (Washington D.C., War Savings Staff of the U.S. Treasury Department, 1942).

<sup>192</sup>Ibid.

Parade or even made a showing on The Billboard or Variety popularity charts.

Civilian war workers were the target of musical persuasion. They heard: "Arms for the Love of America," "We Build "Em, You Sail "Em," "Give Us the Tools," "Over Here," "You Can't Say No to a Soldier," "On the Old Production Line," "I Like a Man Who Comes to Work on Time," and "On the Swing Shift," a song that intimated romance could be found while working in a defense plant:

Life is fine with my baby on the swing shift,  
On the line with my baby on the swing shift.  
Oh, it's a nut here among the nuts and bolts,  
Plus a thousand volts shining from his eyes.  
What care I if they put me on the wing shift,  
When he's near by in the fuselage?  
Overtime, here's why I'm doing it free,  
Baby's with me on the swing shift jamboree.<sup>193</sup>

Songs aimed at women war workers flattered the feminine ego: "The Lady at Lockheed," "We're the Janes Who Make the Planes," "The Lady's on the Job," and "Rosie the Riveter." The temptations, upheaval, and stresses in war workers' lives found a voice in song: "Don't Steal the Sweetheart of a Soldier," "Annie Doesn't Live Here

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<sup>193</sup>Johnny Mercer and Harold Arlen, "On the Swing Shift," (New York: Famous Music Corp., 1942).

Anymore, "<sup>194</sup> and "Milkman, Keep Those Bottles Quiet  
 (Been workin' on the swing shift all night/ Turning out my  
 quota all right)."<sup>195</sup> A plea for calmer thinking regarding  
 racial tensions on the homefront that had erupted in race  
 riots, was the subject of "The House I Live In." It was an  
 appeal for racial harmony and a call to a type of  
 patriotism that would put the good of the nation above  
 personal concerns:

What is America to me?  
 A name, a map, or a flag I see,  
 A certain word--Democracy.  
 What is America to me?

The house I live, a plot of earth, a street,  
 The grocer and the butcher,  
 And the people that I meet,  
 The children in the playground,  
 The faces that I see,  
 All races and religions,  
 That's America to me.  
 The place I work in,  
 The worker by my side,  
 The little town or city,  
 Where my people lived and died,

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<sup>194</sup>"U.S. Popular Music Collection, 1941-1945," Library of Congress; "Lunch Time Follies," The Billboard, 23 Jan. 1943, vol. 55, no. 4: 23.

<sup>195</sup>Don Raye and Gene de Paul, "Milkman, Keep Those Bottles Quiet," (New York: Leo Feist, Inc., 1944).

The "Howdy" and the handshake,  
 The air of feeling free,  
 And the right to speak my mind out,  
 That's America to me.  
 The things I see about me,  
 The big things and the small,  
 The little corner newsstand,  
 And the house a mile tall,  
 The wedding and the church yard,  
 The laughter and the tears,  
 The dream that's been a growing,  
 For one hundred-fifty years.  
 The town I live in,  
 The street, the house, the room,  
 The pavement of the city,  
 Or a garden all in bloom,  
 The church, the school, the clubhouse,  
 The million lights I see,  
 But especially the people,  
 That's America to me.<sup>196</sup>

Richard Lingeman sums up the songs of World War II by saying that, "The enduring songs that came out of the war were basically standard peacetime songs." He says people wanted their popular music "for humming, for mental chewing gum, for a backdrop to their work"; it was also used as "low-level poetry to articulate the chaotic emotions of adolescent love, to dance to, to cheer them up,

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<sup>196</sup>Lewis Allen and Earl Robinson, "The House I Live In (That's America to Me)," (New York: Chappell & Co., 1942). This song did not become popular until sung by Frank Sinatra in the film short The House I Live In, 1945.

and to color their romantic reveries."<sup>197</sup> But within the context of their everyday lives, Americans transported their situations into the popular song lyrics and managed to related popular songs to a wartime message.

Of the thousands of songs written in patriotic fervor, most were destined to be forgotten almost immediately. Don Reid and Sammy Kaye's "Remember Pearl Harbor" has a restless tune that is memorable even today, but who can hum "We'll Remember Pearl Harbor," a song that came out too soon? "Remember Hawaii," in the same mode, did not make it, nor did "Cheer Up, Blue Hawaii." In general the public dismissed provincial nonsense such as "Go Back to Where You Belong, If You Can't Be True to the Red, White, and Blue," "All You Japs Look Alike to Me," "Cranky Yankee," "Hitler's Got the White House Blues," "The Axis Blues," and "At the Setting of the Rising Sun"; also overtly sentimental songs like "Ma, I Miss Your Apple Pie," "Don't Worry, Mom," "To Mom," "Mothers Don't Stop Praying," "That Boy Is Not Coming Back," "Don't Cry Over Me Dear Mother," "Missing in Action," "The Boy Who Didn't Come Back," and "From Baby Shoes to Silver Wings"; banal, virtuous songs such as "Let Your Mother Be Your Sweetheart," "She's Is Every Serviceman's

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<sup>197</sup>Lingeman, Don't You Know There's a War On?, 222.



Girl and Everybody's Sweetheart"; and falsely religious songs like "Look, God, I Have Never Spoken to You," "This Is God's War," and "A Tiny Little Voice (In a Tiny Little Prayer)" did not make much of an impact on the profits of Tin Pan Alley publishers. The American public also rejected war-mother songs such as: "Show Us Your Medals, Mother Malone," "The Star in Our Window," "Here's My Boy, Dear Uncle Sammy," and "There's a Blue Star Shinin' in the Window Tonight"--though all were presumably written with honesty of feeling.<sup>198</sup> While a mother's love had been liberally written about in World War I, it seems not to have been a choice topic for the Your Hit Parade. Happy soldier songs did not fare much better. There were few titles in this category that made more than a dent in the public's music taste. One of the happy soldier songs combined a soldier's love of his mother and his fondness for home-cooked meals. The Jesters were successful in recording and also performing on live radio programs "Ma, I Miss Your Apple Pie":

My brother Bill is in the Army now,  
We heard from him today.  
His waistline's getting back to normal now,  
Here's what he had to say:

Ma, I Miss Your Apple Pie.  
Ma, I miss your stew.

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<sup>198</sup>"U.S. Popular Music Collection, 1941-1945," Library of Congress.

Ma, they're treating me all right,  
 But they can't cook like you.  
 Oh, Ma, nobody's spoiling me,  
 Like you used to do.  
 They won't let me stay in bed until noon.  
 At five-forty-five, they play me a tune.  
 Oh, Ma, I Miss Your Apple Pie.  
 And by the way I miss you, too.<sup>199</sup>

The heroes and heroic battles celebrated in songs also had short lives. There were such forgettable celebratory tunes as: "The Man of the Hour Is General Eisenhower," "A Prayer for General Eisenhower and His Men," "Hats Off to MacArthur! and Our Boys Down There," "Fighting Doug MacArthur," "God Bless MacArthur," "The MacArthur March," "Here's to You, MacArthur," "MacArthur's Men Are Holding," (all of which celebrated MacArthur's stand on Bataan Peninsula), "There's a White Cross in Normandy Tonight," "Stars and Stripes on Iwo Jima," "There's a New Flag on Iwo Jima," and "Yanks in Tokio."<sup>200</sup> It seemed as if the fighting might end before Tin Pan Alley produced the Great American War Song of World War II.

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<sup>199</sup>Carmen Lombardo and John Jacob Loeb, "Ma, I Miss Your Apple Pie," (New York: Fred Ahlert Music Corp., 1941).

<sup>200</sup>"U.S. Popular Music Collection, 1941-1945," Library of Congress.

## CHAPTER 2

### "NO MORE TUNE THAN THE YEARNFUL BELLOWINGS OF A LONELY . . . ROMANTIC COW"

Despite the enormous outpouring of songs from every part of the nation, no single war song emerged from World War II that rallied the American public and the fighting man as George M. Cohan's "Over There" had during World War I. Those responsible for boosting morale during the war worried about this and what contributed to this lack of a "war song". The United States government attempted to give guidance and encourage composers to provide this war's "Over There." But was it even possible for such a song to gain wide popularity in the 1940s? Had the mental and social makeup of American society achieved such a new level of sophistication that the public disdained the use of props such as militant songs as a means of uniting the public and increasing war production? Or did the American people view World War II as more than a military endeavor? Perhaps the technology of the music industry in the 1940s made a new "Over There" not only less likely, but impossible.

One of the central institutions in the quest for the war song that would unite all Americans behind the war seemed an unlikely candidate for the position. The Office of War Information (OWI) did not originally plan to become involved with the music industry, but

as the war progressed, the OWI became more and more involved in what had once been a strictly private business.

The OWI developed from a prior program, the Office of Facts and Figures, whose responsibility was to bolster American morale and to explain the importance of defense measures the government was taking before Americans were officially in the Second World War.<sup>201</sup> Although avoiding actual military intervention in the war in Europe before 1942, the Roosevelt administration in 1941 and 1942 gradually increased military spending and began to assist the Allies in their war against Germany. Two men, Archibald MacLeish and Robert Sherwood, both noted forces in American literature and both dedicated antifascists, piloted the American propaganda programs in the last days before the United States entered the war. MacLeish was especially passionate about American democracy and wary of the uses of propaganda. He believed that in a democracy propaganda had to be based on the "strategy of truth."<sup>202</sup> This

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<sup>201</sup>John Morton Blum, V Was for Victory: Politics and American Culture During World War II, (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Publishers, 1976), 21-24.

<sup>202</sup>Archibald MacLeish quoted in Allan M. Winkler, The Politics of Propaganda: The Office of War Information, 1942-1945, (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1978), 13; Blum, V Was for Victory, 22.

meant giving the American people the facts and then trusting them to make correct decisions. Both men agreed that the purpose of propaganda was to convince the American people that the outcome of the war was crucial them not just to Europeans. Formed in October 1941, the Office of Facts and Figures was charged with deciding which issues the American people needed more information about and then setting up plans for various government agencies to make that information public.<sup>203</sup>

From the beginning, the Office of Facts and Figures was controversial. It had to balance information dispersal with discretion to avoid revealing too much about the United States' military preparedness, or lack thereof. Personality conflicts among administrators, the precise definition of the OFF's mission, and the sprawling growth of the agency after Pearl Harbor created a chaotic situation. After Pearl Harbor, it was painfully evident that the OFF could not do the job intended and it was decided that rather than reorganize the agency, it would be scrapped. Out of this disorder came the Office of War Information, with the responsibility for all propaganda, both foreign and domestic, vested in one agency. Elmer Davis, journalist, author, and radio

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<sup>203</sup>Winkler, 8-30; Blum, 23-25.

commentator, agreed to head the new agency when it was created by executive order on 13 June 1942.<sup>204</sup>

The OWI faced problems from the outset. Americans' mistrust of propaganda had been growing since the end of World War I. World-wide communications made propaganda on a large scale possible for the first time during World War I, and the United States joined the British, French, and Germans in campaigns to gain support from their own citizens and the rest of the world. American propaganda in the First World War was directed by the Committee on Public Information, headed by journalist George Creel. The committee consisted of the heads of the Department of War, Department of the Navy, and the Department of State, but it met only once. After that initial meeting, George Creel made all the committee's decisions.<sup>205</sup>

Since there had been significant opposition to the United States' entry into the war, the Committee on Public Information's first mission was to unite Americans behind the war effort. Using posters, pamphlets, bands, mass rallies, and rousing speakers,

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<sup>204</sup>*Ibid.*, 31-37; OWI: RG 208; Executive Order 9182: SG 169, WNRC.

<sup>205</sup>Winkler., 2.

Creel embarked on what he referred to as "the world's greatest adventure in advertising."<sup>206</sup> The Committee on Public Information did arouse Americans, but it also sparked unrealistic hopes for the future. Woodrow Wilson's Fourteen Points, according to the Committee on Public Information, would bring about a new world order.<sup>207</sup> When the Versailles peace conference turned away from reconciliation and degenerated into an assembly bent on extracting revenge and punitive damages from the Germans, the gap between overly optimistic propaganda and the reality of world politics left many Americans wary of propaganda. The Committee on Public Information's version of America and the future had been "too boisterous, too exuberant" in a world that had not been made safe for democracy.<sup>208</sup>

Following World War I, Americans' mistrust of propaganda grew. The country became fixated with the idea that good propaganda was difficult to detect and could easily dupe normally rational people.

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<sup>206</sup>Stephen Vaughn, Holding Fast the Inner Lines: Democracy, Nationalism, and the Committee on Public Information, (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 1980), 141.

<sup>207</sup>Winkler., 24.

<sup>208</sup>*ibid.*, 2-3.

The rise of Adolph Hitler and the Nazi Party in Germany was proof of the power of propaganda to manipulate ideas and minds.

Propaganda was also criticized for its association with advertising, a newly powerful tool of American business that induced people to buy products they did not want or need.<sup>209</sup>

Americans were wary of propaganda long before World War II. Allen Winkler says that the public continued to "shy away from the very term" and that President Roosevelt "shared their suspicions." Aware of the legacy of suspicion and distrust left over from Creel's Committee on Public Information, Roosevelt did not allocate the widespread powers of the Committee on Public Information to the OWI. His lack of support would eventually doom the OWI to a feeble network of poorly funded offices with no real authority on the homefront.<sup>210</sup>

Initially, the OWI was divided into fourteen branches and bureaus. Among these were the Overseas Branch, the Domestic Branch, the Policy Development Branch, the Bureau of Publications and Graphics, the Bureau of Motion Pictures, the Domestic Radio

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<sup>209</sup>*Ibid.*, 4.

<sup>210</sup>*Ibid.*, 5.



Bureau, and the Bureau of Campaigns.<sup>211</sup> From the beginning, the OWI was hampered by internal conflicts arising from differing perceptions of its mission. Robert Sherwood and Archibald MacLeish thought it should educate the American public and eventually the world about the benefits of American democracy in the postwar future. Other administrators like Milton Eisenhower of the War Relocation Agency and Midwestern newspaper publisher and co-founder of Look, Gardner Cowles, Jr., saw the OWI as an organization to be used in conveying the nation's war goals to the American people.<sup>212</sup>

Furthermore, there was little cooperation from the military and other branches of government. Congress was suspicious of a government agency (with presidentially appointed administrators) which aimed propaganda not only overseas but also at the American public. Republicans saw the OWI as yet another platform from which President Roosevelt could broadcast what they perceived as his liberal internationalism and New Deal philosophy into Americans' ears. And different agencies and politicians disagreed

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<sup>211</sup>OWI: RG 208, WNRC

<sup>212</sup>Winkler, 5.

over the question of what and how much to tell the American public about the kind of war the country was fighting.<sup>213</sup>

The OWI's mission was to oversee propaganda output in all parts of the media--radio, motion pictures, and the press.<sup>214</sup> It attempted to assist in the free dissemination of war news but was blocked at almost every attempt by another government agency or department. The navy, under Admiral Ernest J. King, chief of naval operations and commander-in-chief of the United States Fleet, steadfastly refused to allow information concerning the U.S. Navy and its battles in the Pacific into the public press. Americans' indignation grew at this scarcity of news, especially when the Navy released its dead, wounded, and missing totals from the May 1942 Battle of the Coral Sea months after the fight. The figures were far worse than the public had been led to believe, and the resulting outcry convinced the OWI and finally the Navy to be more forthcoming with its military news.<sup>215</sup>

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<sup>213</sup>Ibid, 38-51.

<sup>214</sup>OWI: RG 208; Domestic Radio Bureau: SG 169; Bureau of Motion Picture Records; SG 172; Records of the Division of Press Intelligence of the Bureau of Special Services; SG 44, WNRC.

<sup>215</sup>Ibid., 49-51.

The OWI tried to clear up misunderstandings that occurred when other departments issued conflicting or confusing statements. For example, faced with a serious shortage of rubber following Japan's take over of the major sources of this raw material, the government diverted petroleum to use in manufacturing artificial rubber and decided to ration gasoline to prevent Americans from wearing out automobile and truck tires. The problem was the government refused to tell the American people the real reason behind the rationing program, and as a result many Americans became outraged when it became common knowledge that good supplies of gasoline were available all across the country except on the East Coast. The OWI tried to explain the apparent deception behind gas rationing in terms of the overall war effort, but got absolutely no cooperation from the other agencies involved.<sup>216</sup>

The Bureau of Publications and Graphics attempted to explain the war to the public. In pamphlets like The Unconquered People, which gave details of Europeans resisting Fascism and The Thousand Million, which consisted of stories about the United Nations, the OWI sought to educate Americans about the global importance of the war and its aftermath. On the homefront, the

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<sup>216</sup>*Ibid.*, 52; Blum, 23.

OWI concerned itself with publications such as How to Raise \$16 Billion, which detailed the need for tax money to fight the war; Battle Stations All, which explained how to fight inflation; and Negroes and the War, which showed that African-Americans, in all kinds of jobs and on all social levels, also had a stake in winning the war.<sup>217</sup>

The OWI's Bureau of Motion Pictures attempted to clarify war aims and problems and unite support for the war effort, especially away those who were not inclined to read newspapers. The OWI produced a number of films with self-explanatory titles: Food for Fighters, Manpower, Salvage, and Troop Train. Hollywood also came under the scrutiny of the propaganda agency. The OWI criticized motion pictures for presenting a deceptive view of the war. The United Nations, (the OWI's term for the Allies, adopted from the Atlantic Charter), fought and won in Hollywood films, but there was little mention of what they were fighting for. Law, justice, and human dignity failed to surface often enough in these films, the OWI complained. Instead, Americans were shown films like Tarzan Triumphs, in which Tarzan battles and defeats Nazis, or they watched light musicals such as, Star Spangled Rhythm, Follow

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<sup>217</sup>Ibid., 55-56.

the Boys, 4 Jills in a Jeep, and The Fleet's In, which used the war as background for love stories and song and dance routines. The OWI criticized movies which portrayed the homefront in comical terms, claiming these films were detrimental to the war effort and hurt civilian volunteerism. In the OWI's opinion, Hollywood's battle pictures were not much better. It also complained that the enemy was stereotyped and ideological differences were almost always settled by brute strength instead of through force of character or negotiation.<sup>218</sup>

The Domestic Radio Division of the OWI was the most successful of its homefront divisions. Cooperation from the major networks enabled the OWI to superimpose wartime priorities on an already established medium. Networks donated time for government-sponsored messages, and the OWI saw that these messages were coordinated with the proper programs. It also helped popular shows incorporate war-related themes into their scripts.<sup>219</sup>

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<sup>218</sup>Ibid., 57-58; OWI: RG 208, Bureau of Intelligence, Media Division, "Weekly Summaries and Analysis of Feature Motion Pictures," WNRC. These summaries were not issued regularly, despite their title.

<sup>219</sup>Ibid., 59-62.; Ibid.

The OWI saw itself as coming to the rescue of the nationwide radio networks' "sur-realist nightmare" in which there was little coordination of war information either from the government or from the broadcasters. There was no coordination of radio facilities, and "everyone was grabbing whatever part of the station schedule he could get." It was apparent to the OWI that radio executives and their managers had "seized the nearest available pitchfork . . . and [were] marching off to war . . . without plans or strategy." There was also a problem, in the OWI's estimation, with many commercials and news programs which were capitalizing on the war in ways that exceeded "all bounds of reason or good taste." Some stations over-emphasized simple subjects and neglected the more difficult ones. The OWI feared this would lead to Americans being overwhelmed with "things to do" but without a clear understanding of the reasons behind the government's requests. Stations scheduled too many war-related broadcasts in a small amount of time. One station broadcast information on forty-four different war topics in one week. Another crucial problem was the way in which money matters were handled. There were too many announcements over a short span of time asking Americans to save money for their taxes, buy war bonds, or give to numerous war charities. Most of these were short, only seconds long, and this

was not enough time to present a clear message. Often announcements were clustered at odd times or in rapid succession or the same message was repeated numerous times. Not all of the confusion was caused by the radio stations. Government agencies flooded stations with material to be broadcast, with little or no explanation about which material was the most important.<sup>220</sup>

Removing confusion about war information for American radio listeners was the first course of action for the OWI. The "best brains" in the radio and advertising businesses were called into service and charged with setting in motion plans which would "weld Government and industry together into one efficient team to do the job." The OWI said its three objectives were: 1) to give the largest possible audience an effective, well-balanced fare of war information through the medium of radio, 2) to superimpose OWI's plans on the established radio structure in a way that would preserve its enormous listening audience, and 3) to allow the radio industry to do the job with as little interference from the OWI as possible. The biggest concern of the OWI, other than getting war information to Americans in an "understandable" form, was that radio audiences would simply stop listening, and that would be

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<sup>220</sup>OWI: RG 208; Domestic Radio Bureau, memo, "Why Government Radio Coordination": SG 169, WNRC.

catastrophic for the stations (economically) and a serious problem for the government, which had grown dependent on radio to convey announcements and, in some cases, propaganda. The Hooper Rating Corporation, which monitored radio listening audiences for statistics regarding numbers of listeners and their preferences, showed in their "sets-in-use" surveys for 1941 and 1942 a steep decline in radio listening in late 1941 that "tobogganed" in early 1942. In April 1942 the downward trend halted, and the number of listeners rose steadily. OWI thought it was "more than coincidence" that the Domestic Radio Bureau's plans to coordinate radio were first inaugurated 27 April 1942.<sup>221</sup>

The Office of War Information constantly reminded those it worked with (other government agencies, radio networks, and show business) that the plans it laid out were always forged with cooperation and input from the radio industry and its associates. OWI said it had plans for only two types of war information. The first was background information to give Americans a better understanding of the "issues of the war, the enemy, the allies, the war plan, the post-war plans, the need for all-out production, sacrifice, and fighting spirit." The second type of information,

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<sup>221</sup>Ibid.



disseminated by OWI through the radio networks, told specific things Americans could do to "help speed the victory." In order to carry out these plans, OWI devised seven different types of radio programs; three would provide "background" information, and four would give "action" information.<sup>222</sup>

The first of three "feature series" was to present information needed for "understanding" the war. These areas included: 1) the issues involved in the war, 2) the nature of the enemy, 3) the nature of the United Nations [Allies], 4) war aims and post-war plans, 5) the fighting forces, including the training, jobs, morale, leadership, and objectives of the Army, Navy, Marines, Coast Guard, and Merchant Marine, 6) the working forces and the need for high production from management and labor, including manpower mobilization, 7) the "home force" and the need for civilian participation through rationing, conservation, taxes, war bonds and savings, nutrition and health, and relocation. The second grouping of the "feature series" was composed of four types of programs to handle the following subjects: 1) programs that treated a single subject for an extended length of time (for example The Army Hour which provided information about all branches of the Army, or the

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<sup>222</sup>ibid.

U. S. Navy Band concert hour which used music as a recruiting aid), 2) programs that continued in their pre-war format but from time to time devoted a show to various subjects of war information, (Peoples' Platform and America's Town Meeting discussed a wide range of topics that did not center on the war), 3) individual programs in some series that treated several war information subjects on each program, (Confidentially Yours with Arthur Hale and Story Behind the Headlines with Cesar Saerchinger) 4) some series, covering all phases of war information, which were designed to appeal to special groups: women, youth (at various age levels), and minorities (for example, Victory Hour), 5) some shows were specifically aimed at audiences with "high intelligence ratings," (Voice of Firestone, University of Chicago Roundtable) versus those designed for audiences of "medium intelligence ratings," (Chicago Theatre of the Air, National History Mystery Quiz) and "low intelligence ratings," (Lum and Abner, Young Dr. Malone)<sup>223</sup>

The OWI planned for radio programs that were one-quarter hour to one-half hour in length, placed in good, "commercial" time,

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<sup>223</sup>Ibid; Harrison B. Summers, ed., A Thirty Year History of Programs Carried on National Radio Networks in the United States, 1926-1956, (New York: Arno Press and the New York Times, 1971), 99-113.

meaning that time of day with the optimum number of listeners for a targeted audience. The OWI promised radio networks the country's "top talents in performing, writing, and directing." It especially focused on New York, Chicago, and Hollywood when it looked for "talent." The agency announced that it was "immaterial to the OWI whether any given series is produced by a network, an advertising agency, a Government agency, or an independent producer."<sup>224</sup> It just wanted the job done in the best possible manner and with the best publicity and promotion by the radio networks and their affiliate stations.

The one area of controversy that arose from the OWI's coordination of domestic radio programs was its insistence on complete control of these radio series. It wanted to maintain a balanced emphasis on the many war information subjects and required that all scripts for these programs be cleared by the agency. This would eventually lead to a massive resignation by writers who thought their work was devalued and their ideas pushed aside in favor of advertising methods imported along with "ad men" from Madison Avenue. The OWI writers saw themselves as

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<sup>224</sup>OWI: RG 208; Domestic Radio Bureau, memo, "Why Government Radio Coordination": SG 169, WNRC.

artists first and propaganda manufacturers second. Many were offended that their talents and expertise were ignored.<sup>225</sup>

The OWI was prepared to assist radio networks with gaining advertisers to sponsor war information shows. According to the OWI, nothing was more patriotic or helpful than program sponsorship, but it did restrict advertisements it considered in "poor taste" and insisted on disclaimers of government product endorsement.<sup>226</sup>

Even after the OWI began organizing broadcasting's war information programs, there were still a large number of these unregulated shows on the air. As of 1 January 1943, the networks broadcast 206 war programs a week. These shows included news and inspirational programs. Some shows classified as war programs merely utilized a war locale or members of the armed forces as a backdrop or stage setting for a show that was purely entertainment. But there were many programs that dealt with the subjects and issues the OWI thought the American people had to understand if the country was to prosecute "total war

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<sup>225</sup>Sydney Weinberg, "What to Tell America: The Writers' Quarrel in the Office of War Information," Journal of American History, vol. LV, no. 1, (June 1968): 73-89.

<sup>226</sup>*ibid.*

wholeheartedly and successfully." Understanding the United States' war aims, as outlined by the OWI, was thought to be crucial to morale, and high morale was thought to be essential to winning the war. In order to achieve this, the OWI mandated that fewer programs be devoted to war information, but those that remained were to be better in quality. If a program was to be informative, it had to meet OWI guidelines, and most importantly, contribute to a better understanding of the war. OWI decided to apply what it termed its "quality yardstick" to shows. It would analyze the time of the broadcast (for optimum number of listeners), the writing (did it explain the subject in a direct manner?), the production and talent (were the best people used for the job?), and most importantly, did the show adhere to the war information policy as set out by the OWI? If a show could not demonstrate these qualities, then it was rejected. In order to prevent some stations from broadcasting entertainment and calling it war information, the OWI warned radio stations that the appearance of military bands on broadcasts could not be classified as war information. In fact, entertainment programs of any type, whether they came from the stations or were broadcast from training camps, were not endorsed as war information programs, even though they might

carry recruiting messages.<sup>227</sup> This attitude would alter with experience as OWI discovered the listening public wanted entertainment and had no second thoughts about turning the radio dial from officially sponsored OWI programs less pedantic programs. But in the beginning, the radio networks' fear of a government takeover of broadcasting, in the name of national defense, led them to cooperate. Government coercion was not necessary; the radio networks willingly gave free airtime to the war effort.

The OWI did have valid reasons for its policies. If the blizzard of unregulated war information programs (or what the stations thought passed for these) had continued, it is conceivable that radio might have continued to lose more listeners and the government would have lost a valuable communication tool. Many of the so-called war information programs were vague in purpose, or they were merely a cover for advertising. (One hair-removal product's advertisement warned listeners: "For a nation under arms, watch your under arms."<sup>228</sup>) The OWI guidelines reduced the number of shows and increased the quality of war information

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<sup>227</sup>ibid.

<sup>228</sup>OWI: RG 208, Domestic Radio Bureau, "Guidelines for Radio in Wartime," SG 169, WNRC.

programs by giving the stations definite, planned topics. It also enabled topics which had not been addressed before to have coverage on the networks. But the most important service the OWI performed was organizing the broadcasting networks to make it possible for stations to return a large portion of their schedules to sheer entertainment. This allowed radio audiences to relax and prevented them from being "burdened with too much war."<sup>229</sup>

The OWI did recognize the need for entertainment that would also deliver messages, and so it organized its "Special Assignment Plan" which allowed for programs which were primarily entertainment or public service oriented. These shows already had established audiences, and OWI wisely decided to not interfere with them. They inserted war information as part of the program, but it never became the primary focus. The Special Assignment Plan called for shows, which had volunteered to participate, to insert war information when the need arose. With some notable exceptions, the OWI did not plan for this information to be a weekly event, and the OWI stressed that these shows should normally "confine themselves strictly to entertainment." However, the range of material, the variety of topics, and the groups of society that

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<sup>229</sup>ibid.

the OWI aimed its war information at soon made the Special Assignment Plan a regular feature of many of broadcasting's most popular shows. Special Assignment Plan shows targeted separate groups within American society: women, farmers, youth, minorities, and various economic and educational levels of society. Again, a paramount concern of the OWI was "listener fatigue." The agency was afraid that Americans would grow weary of being surrounded by the war and simply turn off their radios to obtain some relief.

Although the OWI said it was not telling broadcasters how to write, or censoring the shows, there was a threat in the OWI's statement that "quality not quantity" was the goal of the plan, and programs that did not seem to be "handling their assigned messages with the anticipated effectiveness" might be replaced in the OWI's Special Assignments Plan. By this OWI meant it would select a replacement from among already existing radio shows--not that it would remove a networks' show from the air. With this "understanding" certain shows volunteered to take part in the Special Assignments Plan. Some shows were to broadcast information on a single subject. For example, the Metropolitan Opera broadcasts for the 1942-1943 season dealt each week with some aspect of the United Nations. Another program, Information



Please, presented basic information about the "food problem."

Other shows had topics that rotated and some that presented a variety of war information subjects.<sup>230</sup>

Still insisting that it was not telling networks how to do their jobs, the OWI suggested ways to "work essential information" on the "'understanding' phases of the war" into programs. The possibilities, as outlined by the OWI were: 1) make the information the subject of an entire dramatic program, or in the case of daytime serials [soap operas] the information could be spread through several shows, 2) make the information subject the theme for a single dramatic or musical spot within a musical or variety program, 3) make the subject the topic of a forum or discussion program, 4) make the subject a continuing theme of a musical program, 5) make the subject the basis of a quiz show, 6) make the subject the topic for a guest speaker--"government officials, heroes, or outstanding civilian workers," 7) or make the subject material for an out-of-character message by the star of a program.<sup>231</sup>

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<sup>230</sup>Ibid.

<sup>231</sup>Ibid.

The Special Assignment Plan was to be operated by the OWI's Special Assignment Section with a Chief and a small staff of "writer-expeditors." These were OWI personnel whose duties consisted of assigning subjects to radio program producers and providing "background material and ideas" for the shows. The "writer-expeditors" also provided their "aid and counsel" to a program's staff of writers. The OWI insisted it was only attempting to "help" writers and producers integrate war information into their programs.<sup>232</sup> The Chief and his "writer-expeditors" contacted performers on the selected programs to assure that the "stars" understood their function in disseminating war information. This involved travel to New York, Chicago, and Hollywood. There are no records which note any OWI personnel turning down these assignments.

Prior to 1 February 1943 the OWI sent complete pre-recorded programs to radio stations for broadcast. These series aired once or twice a week, such as: Star Parade, by the Treasury Department; Victory Front, Victory Volunteers, and This Is Our Enemy, by the OWI; and Voice of the Army, by the U.S. Army. There were also programs which appeared once and were based on "timely and

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<sup>232</sup>ibid.

topical" war information. Following 1 February 1943 the OWI discontinued all of its pre-recorded shows with the exception of Treasury Star Parade. The majority of these shows did not have a large audience, and it was decided to allow radio networks to use their own programs and rely on OWI for information, not programming.<sup>233</sup>

Treasury Star Parade, produced by the Radio Section of the Treasury Department Defense Savings Staff with the approval of the OWI, was on the air during 1942 and 1943.<sup>234</sup> It was an overtly propagandistic program whose mission was to sell war bonds and to sell World War II to the American public. Treasury Star Parade presented the war as a just war being fought by a democratic nation with a citizen-soldier army composed of free and equal citizens. It emphasized American values: fair play,

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<sup>233</sup>J. Fred McDonald, "Government Propaganda in Commercial Radio-The Case of Treasury Star Parade, 1942-1943," Journal of Popular Culture, vol. XII, no. 2, (Fall 1979): 285-304.

<sup>234</sup>In addition to OWI, several U.S. government agencies produced radio programs during WWII. The Department of War was responsible for This Is the Army and The Army Hour. Other government agencies and departments involved were the Office of Civilian Defense, Department of Labor, Department of Justice, Office of Emergency Management, and the Co-ordinator of Inter-American Affairs.

rooting for the "little guy," and the Judeo-Christian religious foundation of the nation. The programs used sports metaphors to explain war aims. As with other OWI sponsored broadcasts, Treasury Star Parade sometimes targeted women, children, farmers, laborers, and factory workers. And it appealed for domestic unity. For example, dissenters, in specially written dramas, were made to see the error of their ways. The series also used scare tactics to coerce listeners. Episodes like "Chicago, Germany," pretended to describe life in the United States if the Nazis were to win. In a break with OWI's officially stated policy, Treasury Star Parade treated the two enemy nations quite differently. The Germans were portrayed as the victims of the Nazi Party and its leaders, captives in their own land, whereas all the Japanese were described as barbarians. They were "Nips," "Japs," "yellow bellies," "flat eyes," "rats," and "monkeys."<sup>235</sup> The Nazis, as opposed to the German people, were madmen, but the whole Japanese people were subhuman butchers.

To maintain its listening audience, Treasury Star Parade relied on famous entertainers. Some of the most popular musicians of the time appeared on the show. Harry James', Bob Crosby's, Kay

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<sup>235</sup> *ibid.*

Kyser's, and Vaughn Monroe's bands all performed in the name of Treasury Bonds. Fred Waring and his Pennsylvanians, Xavier Cugat, and Ted Lewis provided an alternative to swing. Singers ranged from Rudy Vallee to Bing Crosby.<sup>236</sup> Treasury Star Parade's guest musicians sold the war and war bonds to the sounds of hit tunes and newly composed war songs. The latter usually were performed only once.

Beginning 1 February 1943, the OWI tried a different tactic. It sent complete scripts to the networks to produce and broadcast. The first of these was a new war information program entitled Uncle Sam. The stated purpose of Uncle Sam was to tell the American people once again "with whom and against whom we are fighting," and more importantly, why everyone has "certain responsibilities for seeing this war through." Uncle Sam treated subjects such as: the home front, the United Nations, manpower, working forces, the enemy, minorities, and fighting forces. Topics ranged from food hoarding, getting a war job, and joining the WAAC, to Brotherhood Week and systematic starvation of conquered peoples by the enemy. Fortunately, the programs were only fifteen minutes once a week. Of course, OWI had great hopes for Uncle

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<sup>236</sup>ibid.

Sam, and counseled stations that the success of the show might induce local advertisers to sponsor the programs, and so make them profitable for the stations to air.<sup>237</sup>

Financial loss was a great concern of radio stations during the opening months of World War II. The OWI warned that as the war progressed, many stations might have to shut down because of a lack of consumer goods for advertisers to publicize. Inevitably, the stations' revenues from advertising money would shrink. Stations in sparsely populated areas would lose listeners as people moved in search of employment and better opportunities. The OWI was convinced it had to step in and get war information to Americans while the commercial communications network was still intact. The OWI saw "sponsoring" or giving its approval, to "official" war programs as the most expedient way to get its message to the public.<sup>238</sup>

As it turned out, radio stations did not close as the Office of War Information had feared. Instead they prospered. There had been serious doubt in the 1930s that radio could survive the

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<sup>237</sup>OWI: RG 209; Domestic Radio Bureau, "Why Government Radio Coordination?": SG 169, WNRC.

<sup>238</sup>*ibid.*

Depression, but enough stations held on to reap great rewards during the war. The real threat to radio's future would be television, not the loss of the listening audience or advertisers during the war. Stations expanded during the war, increased the number of listeners, began offering live broadcasts from military training camps and other war-related sites, and converted to twenty-four hour broadcasts to accommodate the new audience working the swing (4 P.M. to midnight) and night shifts.<sup>239</sup>

Radio was a vital force in the everyday life of Americans, and the OWI was not above using scare tactics and subtle coercion to gain access to the networks. Predicting the failure of radio stations was one ploy. The OWI policy led to something never before experienced in the United States: privately owned radio stations broadcasting government produced programs. The OWI insisted, of course, it was stepping in as a rescuer to bring order to chaos and would gladly drop its "sponsorship" (meaning station were to donate air time to OWI programs) as soon as circumstances permitted. Thus the OWI encouraged stations to seek private sponsors who would donate time for Treasury Star Parade and Uncle Sam. Since it was the patriotic thing to do, most stations were

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<sup>239</sup>Thomas A. DeLong, The Mighty Music Box, 247.

able to pick up advertisers more than willing to have their names connected with a war show. The only restrictions set by the OWI were that no wine or beer advertising accounts could be accepted and that after meeting the approval of the Domestic Radio Bureau, the first series of commercials from advertisers had to be approved by the OWI in Washington, D.C.<sup>240</sup>

The second area of concern for the OWI's Domestic Radio Bureau was what it labeled "action messages." The purpose of the Network Allocation Plan was to see that the proper messages were linked with the shows and advertisers which would reach the OWI's intended audience. "Action messages" were those telling Americans to buy bonds, save scrap, enlist in the armed forces, and conserve energy. Before the OWI's Network Allocation Plans, stations were barraging listeners with as many as eighty or ninety different messages a day. What if Americans became so dazed or annoyed or bored that they turned off their radios? That could pose a threat to the war effort and national security. To prevent this, the OWI assigned "action messages" to particular advertisers at specific times. Spacing the messages to "avoid annoying repetition" and to cover the widest possible audience paid off for

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<sup>240</sup>OWI: RG 209; Domestic Radio Bureau, "Why Government Radio Coordination?": SG 169, WNRC.



the Network Allocation Plan. Candidates for Marine officer schools rose forty per cent after two weeks of "action messages" between 8 June and 21 June 1942. The efforts to recruit glider pilots, prior to messages broadcast from 6 through 20 July 1942, had failed. Within a week following radio announcements, 30,000 glider pilot trainees filled the Civil Aeronautics Administration schools. An "action message" calling for Army and Navy nurses ran for three weeks beginning 27 July 1942. It was hoped that 3,000 nurses a month might fill the ranks. In most areas of the country, new recruits exceeded the local quota by fifty per cent, some by one hundred per cent, and in some communities the numbers reached 250 per cent. Non-combat pilots were recruited on the air for only one week on the Network Allocation Plan, but the response was overwhelming. In seven days 107,000 potential flyers applied. The OWI considered the Network Allocation Plan a great success.<sup>241</sup>

Another OWI plan for getting war information to American radio audiences was the "Spot Plan." This plan called for short announcements sponsored by one of the seventy-four approved OWI advertisers. OWI would send a "fact sheet" to local station writers from which they would prepare "Spot Announcements" that would be

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<sup>241</sup> Ibid.

"effective on his particular program." OWI thought that this method gave the writers freedom to insert messages at the opening, middle, or close of a program. Other methods involved using a war message as part of the dialogue of a story, in a song, or in any other manner that the writer thought effective. The "Spot Announcement Plan," according to W.B. Lewis, chief of the Domestic Radio Bureau, proved to be one of the "most interesting" of the OWI's plans for radio coordination.<sup>242</sup> When local station writers were given the opportunity to create their own announcements, the OWI found that the writers were quite capable of taking the fact sheets from the agency and writing excellent messages. All that was necessary was guidance in the form of suggested topics.

Another area of concern for OWI was the local "live" programs, which were difficult to control. The content of live shows often repeated that of the prerecorded OWI programs. Scripts for these local programs were composed by local radio writers, and they, as OWI described them, ranged "from poor to good." The failure of these local shows concerned the OWI since small towns and rural areas were served by radio stations with a minimum of staff and resources. OWI proposed to eliminate war information programs

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<sup>242</sup>*Ibid.*

which could not be improved, especially those it considered "non-essential," and those local programs which duplicated "good" national network programs. The OWI used its authority as a government agency to intimidate local radio stations and national networks alike. The mention of removing programs from the air was often enough to send shock waves through the industry. It must be remembered that the war was a new experience for the OWI and broadcasters. In the beginning months of World War II, they were both unsure of the methods that would bring about the desired results: getting vital war information to the public without losing the broadcasters' audience.<sup>243</sup>

The OWI was seeking to control the content and flow of war information from the smallest radio station in rural areas to the enormously powerful nationally-syndicated networks. Knowing that its methods and motives would be questioned, the OWI tried to reassure stations of its good intentions. Radio in a democracy, it told the station owners, "is a complex, diffuse business that cannot be turned overnight into a single-minded, smooth-functioning instrument of war information." Nevertheless, the government was not interested in taking over privately owned and managed stations.

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<sup>243</sup>ibid.

The OWI insisted that all it offered was "coordination" services, not "coopting" services.<sup>244</sup> As the casualty lists grew, the OWI also worried that the amount of "war" on the radio would still be too much. If people who had lost brothers, fathers, sweethearts, and sons could not turn to radio programs for some relief and escape from the war through a "needed balance of entertainment," then they might seek out other forms of relief or distraction--forms not controlled by the OWI. The OWI continued to streamline and coordinate war information in order to improve its effectiveness. The agency tried to get the most information to the American public in the least objectionable way. In actuality, the OWI sought to lessen the quantity of war information on the air and replace it with direct, single-minded information in amounts that the public could absorb without becoming weary of the subject.

In an effort to maintain a listening audience and make sure that OWI approved war information reached the American public, the OWI formulated a series of guidelines for writers. These directives came, so the OWI claimed, at the request of radio writers for the best way to present war information. After formulating its guidelines, the OWI sent its "handbook of practical

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<sup>244</sup>*ibid.*

suggestions for use in the preparation of wartime radio scripts" to every radio station in the country. After comment from broadcasters, these directions eventually were reworked and refined by the OWI and offered as suggestions to American songwriters, publishers, and recording companies.

The OWI was sensitive to criticism that a government agency was overstepping its bounds by telling radio stations what and what not to write about, and insisted that it had "no desire to be censors, no desire to tell writers what they should say." Although the OWI did suggest that stations not adhering to its guidelines and suggestions might face repercussions, these threats were based on predictions of the United States, as a nation-under-seige, which did not materialize. The OWI planned for the worst and in reality got more cooperation than it had anticipated. In fact, the broadcasting industry joined the war effort so wholeheartedly, that containing the networks' enthusiasm became the OWI's focus.<sup>245</sup>

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<sup>245</sup>OWI: RG 208; "When Radio Writes for War," SG 169, WNRC; The National Association of Broadcasters calculated almost 36,000 hours of free programs aired during the period May-July 1942. This included 1,541,640 Spot Announcements, and 187,075 pre-recorded and live programs. The largest numbers of live programs were 15 minute programs for the Army, Navy, Marine Corps, and Civilian Defense. Pre-recorded programs for the Treasury Department's war bonds and stamps and the Army were tabulated at 510,090. "Radio to 'Sell' the War," Variety, 9 September 1942, vol.148, no.1: 1, 47.

The OWI also claimed it did not want to tell songwriters how to do their job, but it offered the following hints: Songs about the enemy should focus on those who were against the "United Nations [Allies]." The enemy's existence was the problem, and songwriters should not minimize his ability. The enemy should not be the object of humorous songs because ridiculing him might lead the American public to underestimate his strength. This would lead to complacency and a lessening of the intensity of the war effort. Songs that called the enemy by derogatory names, such as "yellow rats" or "dirty Huns" would not help win the war. OWI's reasoning was that the real enemy was not the German or Japanese people, who had been misled by their "despotic rulers, by lies, [and] by false promises based on false premises." When the war was over, the people of Germany and Japan would be "re-educated" and "permitted to know the fuller, better life that is our aim for all the world." This stand by the OWI was in direct opposition to the results of its previously mentioned polls which showed that Americans thought the Germans had been duped by their leaders but no distinction was made between the Japanese people and their leaders. All Japanese were war mongers and equally guilty. The OWI cautioned songwriters that the enemy existed within the United States. Any songs that fostered disunity among Americans,

by dealing with racial prejudice, labor unrest, and discontent with rationing, or by fostering isolationism, appeasement, or compromise with the enemy, were taboo.<sup>246</sup>

The OWI explicitly encouraged songs that were complimentary to members of the United Nations, especially those with themes of unity: "common action, common love of freedom, common consideration and esteem of one group of people for another." Writers and composers were encouraged to look on the United Nations as people with many different languages, religions, customs, histories, and governments who were "bonded" by a fundamental respect for freedom. Stalin's totalitarian government in the U.S.S.R. was conveniently ignored by the OWI. Songs that passed this test were: "And Still the Volga Flows," "Brave Britain," "British Children's Prayer," "Everything Will Be Like Home in Ireland," "Hello, Broadway, London Calling," "The King Is Still in London," "March of the Volunteers (A Fighting Song of China)," "My British Buddy," "Paris Will be Paris Once again," "Ring out Big Ben," "Spirit of Aberdeen," "Stalin Wasn't Stalin," "That Russian Winter,"

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<sup>246</sup>*Ibid.*

"There'll Always Be an England," and "United Nations."<sup>247</sup> The OWI wanted the United Nations represented, not merely as allies, but as the best hope for a "successful post-war period." Thus, songs should not present a "superior viewpoint" that the Yanks were coming and the world's troubles would soon be over. This was exactly the opposite tack taken by Tin Pan Alley as it sought the Great American War Song--another "Over There." Songs should not take the view that the rest of the world was following America or that America was the future center of world culture. American war efforts should not downplay the work of the United Nations: other countries made tanks and planes. And there should be caution about writing songs that contained statements about Americans being the "best fighters" in the world. A quick perusal of a list of war song titles from American songwriters reveals that the OWI's directives about the enemy and the United Nations were not followed too closely, especially in the case of songs dealing with the fighting abilities of the U.S. military. Tin Pan Alley created the following boastful songs: "All Out for America," "America United Is Rolling Along," "The American Way," "Arms for the Love of America," "Because We Are Americans," "Call Out the Marines,"

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<sup>247</sup>"U.S. Popular Music Collection, 1941-1945," Library of Congress.



"Defend Your Country," "Fighting Men of Uncle Sam," "Let's Be True to the Red, White and Blue," "Let's Bring New Glory to Old Glory," "Long Live America, the Savior of Democracy," "Roll Tanks Roll," "They Started Something," "This Is Our Side of the Ocean," "Song of the Bombardiers," "The Song of the Fighting Marines," "Song of the Tank Destroyer Men," "When the Yanks Go Marching In," and "Uncle Sam Gets Around."<sup>248</sup>

The OWI's suggestions for writing about the world after the war were placed in the context of the Atlantic Charter, and songwriters were encouraged to incorporate the terms of the Charter into their work. The generalized listing of these terms included the end of territorial ambitions by any nation against another, equal participation in world trade, improved labor and economic standards for all countries, freedom of the seas, and universal abandonment of force by all the world. The OWI said that radio and entertainment could get people thinking and discussing the kind of world they wanted to live in after the war.<sup>249</sup> Very few of the songs written between 1943 and 1945 incorporated these suggestions, though the following might have followed the

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<sup>248</sup>ibid.

<sup>249</sup>OWI: RG 208; "When Radio Writes for War," SG 169, WNRC.

guidelines, at least in part: "After It's Over," "Bill of Rights," "Citizens Song," "For Peace and Freedom,"--(the official song of the 1940 World's Fair), "For the Flag, for the Country, for the Future of All Mankind," "Freedom for the World," "Fun to Be Free," "Let Us All Sing Auld Lang Syne," "Our Faith Shall Live (A Prayer for the New World. Dedicated to Captain Eddie Rickenbacker)," "The Song of Liberation," and "We Fight for Peace."<sup>250</sup>

Songwriters were cautioned to avoid overstatement. They should stay away from superlatives such as, "This is the only way," or "The best way" to help win the war. OWI asked that the total strength of the country, not one separate asset, be stressed. OWI feared "unhealthy competition" among groups for "recognition" that would detract from the cooperative effort the country needed to win the war.

A further concern of Office of War Information was that songwriters would use their skills to influence Americans in the wrong way. Songs aimed at military recruiting might, for example, glorify the armed services too much. Writers were reminded that "war is not pretty," and people should not join the service to "wear flashy uniforms" or "see the world." The OWI labeled as misleading

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<sup>250</sup>Ibid.; "U.S. Popular Music Collection, 1941-1945," Library of Congress.

any "sales talk" that stressed ideas such as, "Join the WAACs (or WAVES) and wear good-looking uniforms," or "Nurses have a high percentage of marriage in their ranks," or "Join the merchant marine . . . see Waikiki Beach." These directions apparently reached Tin Pan Alley too late, or they were ignored, judging from the number of songs that treat these subjects in the very manner OWI cautioned against. Songs that did not meet OWI's standards included: "The Army's Made a Man Out of Me," "The Blond Sailor," "Cleanin' My Rifle and Dreamin' of You," "Corns for My Country," "He Wears a Pair of Silver Wings," "I Wanna Dance with a Sailor," "Jerry, My Soldier Boy," "Jumpin' with a G.I. Gal," "The Little Brown Suit My Uncle Bought Me," "My Beloved is Rugged," "My Heart Belongs to a Sailor," "Silver Wings in the Moonlight," and "That Star-Spangled Baby of Mine."<sup>251</sup> One of these, "The Blond Sailor," first appeared in 1937, but returned in 1945 and was typical of the type of song OWI wished to discourage as possessing an overly romantic view of military service:

Farewell, your Blond Sailor must leave for a while dear.  
 Farewell, send me off with a kiss and a smile, dear.  
 All my love and devotion I will leave in your care;  
 As deep as the ocean and as true as a pray'r.

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<sup>251</sup>OWI: RG 208; "When Radio Writes for War," SG 169, WNRC; "U.S. Popular Music Collection, 1941-1945," Library of Congress.

When my journey is over, you'll be waiting I know,  
Farewell, my sweet darling, your Blond Sailor must go.<sup>252</sup>

The horrific side of war was to be avoided in song as well. Sad tales of "blood baths" or "seaman fried in oil" were detrimental to all Americans, to recruitment, and especially to the "womenfolk . . . [who] can picture all too vividly the horrors that may befall their men." Songs of death or loss should be curtailed, too.<sup>253</sup> Only cheerful, brave soldiers and their loyal families should populate the stories told in song. There could be an occasional dead hero, such as "The Ballad of Rodger Young" and "The Dying Soldier," but his actions should be told with as little detail as possible while the songwriter emphasized the hero's sacrifice for all Americans.

Overzealous patriotic songs filled with unconscious jingoism posed a threat to post-war harmony among the nations of the world, and the OWI cautioned against them. For example, the word "yellow" as applied to the Japanese could just as easily refer to America's allies the Chinese and other Oriental nationalities. Warnings were issued against calling the British "limeys", the

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<sup>252</sup>Mitchell Parish, Bell Leib, and J. Pfeil, "The Blond Sailor," (New York: Mills Music Co., 1937 & 1945).

<sup>253</sup>OWI: RG 208; "When Radio Writes for War," SG 169, WNRC.

Japanese "Japs," the Germans "Huns," the Chinese "Chinamen," and against giving African-American song characters names such as "Eight-ball," "Ironhead," or "Razor." On the other hand, songs should not minimize the Japanese as enemies by typing them as "funny little men whose teeth protrude, who always wear thick-lenses spectacles, and say 'so solly.'" Once again, the OWI message fell on deaf ears in Tin Pan Alley which cranked out songs like: "Bye, Bye, Benito," "From Broadway to Tokyo," "Der Fuehrer's Face," "Hitler's Funeral March," "Hitler's Reply to Mussolini," "Let's Put the Axe to the Axis," "Mow the Japs Down!," "Mussolini's Letter to Hitler," "Put Another Nail in Hitler's Coffin," "Son of a Gun Who Picks on Uncle Sam," "We're Gonna Have to Slap the Dirty Little Jap (and Uncle Sam's the Guy Who Can Do It)," and "We've Got a Job to Do on the Japs, Baby." 254

Boasting about the United States' past glories in song would not help win this war, according to the OWI. After all, some of the countries we were fighting alongside in World War II had been our enemies in past wars. If songwriters had to boast of past glories, it would be better to extol our defense of liberty and freedom instead of past military exploits. Songs that did not quite fit the

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254 Ibid.

OWI's non-boasting category were: "The American Way," "America's on the March," "Be Glad You're an American," "Because We Are Americans," "'Damn the Torpedoes. Full Speed Ahead!,'" "Gentlemen, the Toast Is: Our Land!," "God Must Have Loved America," "I'm a Son of a Yankee Doodle Dandy," "Long Live America," "My Great, Great Grandfather," "Ramparts We Watch," "Remember Pearl Harbor," "There's a Star Spangled Banner Waving Somewhere," and "We Did It Before and We Can Do It Again."<sup>255</sup>

Songwriters were not expected to lose their sense of humor when writing songs for wartime, but certain situations that were funny in peacetime were not in wartime. Losing girlfriends to best friends or men with more money or good looks were no longer acceptable subjects for humorous songs. Songs about wartime restrictions or sacrifices were not a good idea either. Songs about rationing, shortages, curfews, higher taxes, or the shortage of consumer goods were dangerous because the OWI thought the message (if there was one) could get lost in the humor. Songs dealing with these subjects included: "Duration Blues," "G.I. Blues," "G.I. Jive," "Good-for Nothing Is Good-for Something Now," "I Dreamt This War Was Over," "I Feel a Draft Coming On," "I've Been Drafted

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<sup>255</sup>ibid.

(Now I'm Drafting You)," "Make with the Bullets, Benny" "'Oh, My Achin' Back,'" "(Bomb) Shelter Lullaby," "Soldier, Let Me Read Your Letter," "There'll Never Be a Black-Out in My Heart for You," "There Won't Be a Shortage of Love," and "There's No Ceiling on Love."<sup>256</sup>

The OWI cautioned songwriters to choose the right words for their songs carefully. "War effort" was too apologetic. The OWI preferred "war job, war drive, fighting the war." "Sabotage" was a word the OWI said was overused and was in danger of losing its effectiveness. For example, it was sabotage to arrive late for work, to drive on Sunday, or to fail to vote. Songs warned Americans, "Shhh ! ! ! It's a Military Secret," and "A Slip of the Lip (Can Sink a Ship)." Other words to avoid were "game" in connection with war, "exterminate the enemy," (that was "Hitler's policy--not ours"), and "conquer" when referring to the enemy. Americans "liberated" Axis countries in order to "restore" countries to their "rightful owners." However, there were only a few songs that mentioned "liberation" (eg. "The Song of Liberation") while numerous songs told of "victory": "Coast Guard Victory Song," "Fight to Victory," "Let's Keep a V in Every Heart," "On, On to

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<sup>256</sup>ibid.

Victory," "'V' Calls for Victory," "V for Victory," "The 'V' Song," "'V' to Victory," "Victory Cavalcade," and "Vic'try Polka."<sup>257</sup>

These guidelines were not enforced by the OWI in the case of private or commercial publishing or recording, but if a song was to be used on a program in cooperation with government agencies, clearance by the Domestic Radio Bureau of the OWI was mandatory. Songs used in radio scripts broadcast overseas also had to be cleared by the Office of Censorship.<sup>258</sup>

The OWI and its controversial mission did not survive the Congressional elections of 1942. Near the end of 1942, a coalition in Congress of conservative Republicans and southern Democrats began to dismantle the New Deal and the OWI along with it. Between 1942 and 1943, Congress eliminated the Civilian Conservation Corps, the Works Progress Administration, and the National Youth Administration. The attack on OWI was led by Republicans Senator Rufus C. Holoman of Oregon and Representative John Taber of New York, and by a Democrat, Senator Harry F. Byrd, of West Virginia. Their objection to OWI was the publication of a magazine called Victory. This was intended for distribution

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<sup>257</sup>ibid.

<sup>258</sup>ibid.



overseas, to explain American democracy and culture. The cover of the first issue was a full color photograph of President Franklin D. Roosevelt, against the background of an American flag. Senator Holoman and members of Congress opposed to Roosevelt attacked OWI and Victory as "mere window dressing for a personal political campaign for a fourth term."<sup>259</sup> The head of the OWI, Elmer Davis, found his budget slashed by Congress. This forced the closure of its regional offices. Congress put a stop to the OWI's propaganda publications for use on the homefront, so that subsequently all domestic war information came through commercial news channels directly from the government agencies responsible.<sup>260</sup>

Despite these problems, the OWI's liberal propagandists in its Overseas Bureau, headed by Sherwood Anderson, continued to foster their interpretation of the war in terms of belief in the Four Freedoms: freedom of speech and expression, freedom of worship, freedom from want, and freedom from fear, as outlined by President Roosevelt in his pre-Pearl Harbor message to Congress, 6

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<sup>259</sup>"Congress Blast Against OWI Portends Assault on New Deal," The Nation, 22 February 1943: 25-26.

<sup>260</sup>Winkler, The Politics of Propaganda, 70.

January 1941<sup>261</sup> and the tenets of the Atlantic Charter, which laid out the plans for the postwar world Roosevelt and Churchill had formulated during a secret meeting aboard an American cruiser and a British battleship in Placentia Bay, Newfoundland in the summer of 1941. Included in the Atlantic Charter were "common principles" upon which the parties based "their hopes for a better future for the world." These were: post-war security, the right of self-determination for all peoples, the right of freedom of the seas for all nations, the establishment of an international system of security based on disarmament, and the pledge by the United States and Great Britain not to seek territorial gains as spoils of war. The Atlantic Charter was a joint statement of war aims mixed with the idealistic goals of the New Deal and Woodrow Wilson's Fourteen Points. The OWI used the declarations of the Four Freedoms and pledges of the Atlantic Charter, published in pamphlet form, to give a sense of purpose and meaning to America's entry into the war.<sup>262</sup>

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<sup>261</sup>A. Craig Baird, Representative American Speeches, 1940-1941, (New York: H.W. Wilson, 1941), 185.

<sup>262</sup>Winkler, The Politics of Propaganda, 5; OWI: RG 208; "The Four Freedoms," pamphlet, Records of the Deputy Chief, Domestic Radio Bureau: SG 169, WNRC; James MacGregor Burns, The Lion and the Fox: The First Political Biography of Franklin Delano Roosevelt, (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1956), 459.

The OWI also made great efforts to present Americans as they wanted to be seen: sympathetic, sentimental, shrewd, aggressive, tough, and with "horse sense." American ingenuity and industry were praised. Ordinary life was celebrated in films and stories about picnics, baseball games, town meetings, and church services. Elmer Davis said the message of the OWI was, "We are coming, we are going to win, and in the long run everybody will be better off because we won."<sup>263</sup>

From the commencement of the war, the OWI recognized the power of radio. Here was a tool for propaganda already in place that could reach millions of listeners. Ninety percent of American homes had a radio.<sup>264</sup> After coordinating the "correct" music and organized propaganda "spot" announcements with already existing radio shows, seeing that popular shows included war-related themes and if applicable, music, into their plots, and convincing the radio networks to donate free air time to government-sponsored

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<sup>263</sup>Elmer Davis quoted in Allan M. Winkler, Home Front U.S.A.: America During World War II, (Arlington Heights, Illinois: Harlan Davidson, Inc., 1986), 29.

<sup>264</sup>Winkler, The Politics of Propaganda, 60.

war messages and entertainment shows,<sup>265</sup> the OWI's executive director, Elmer Davis, turned his attention to the music industry and stepped into the search for the Great American War Song. The OWI took its cue from President Franklin D. Roosevelt and cited a letter he wrote to Mrs. Vincent Ober, president of the National Federation of Music Clubs, about the strength of music:

The inspiration of great music can help to instill a fervor for the spiritual values in our way of life; and thus to strengthen democracy against those forces which would subjugate and enthrall mankind.<sup>266</sup>

The OWI wanted to assist musicians in finding the Great American War Song, but these same government administrators harshly criticized initial examples of wartime music. Lyman Bryson, head of the Music Committee of the OWI, complained of pop tunes that the ballads were too saccharine and that the war songs were "just love songs with a once-over-lightly-war

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<sup>265</sup>*ibid.*, 60.

<sup>266</sup>"Our President Speaks for Democracy," The Etude, 1 June 1942, vol. 60: 364; "President Praises Music," New York Times, 19 June 1941: 23.

background."<sup>267</sup> Lyricists had merely slipped a soldier into their songs: "It was still boy-meets-girl stuff."<sup>268</sup> For example, "We'll Meet Again," "The White Cliffs of Dover," and "Blue Skies Are Just Around the Corner" contained lyrics that could be relevant to many situations; the connotations of the songs depended on the listeners and their circumstances. The personalization of popular music lyrics by the American public was not new to the music industry, but the advent of the war made it seem more important than ever to produce songs that would bolster morale and support the war effort.

There was a fear that these simple, sweet, love songs would lull audiences into a false sense of security. The ultimate goal of the OWI was the manufacture of "freedom songs." that would "wave the flag and shout Hallelujah for all conquered and oppressed peoples."<sup>269</sup> The OWI thought that after a strong start in 1942, popular music "fizzled out" in its effort to rally the American

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<sup>267</sup>OWI: RG 208; Records of the Domestic Radio Bureau, memo 2696 from the Office of the Chief to all Domestic Radio Bureau offices: SG 169, WNRC.

<sup>268</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>269</sup>*Ibid.*

people behind the war. During America's first full year of fighting, seventeen percent of all popular songs reaching the top ten were war songs, but the number of patriotic and/or martial tunes being produced by Tin Pan Alley fell steadily during 1942. The same types of songs that had been popular prior to the war, ballads and swing tunes, continued at the top of the popularity charts in 1942.<sup>270</sup>

The problem was not antiwar songs. The only artists to question the conflict, once the United States was formally in the war, were a few blues singers who noted at the end of the war, in tunes such as Big Bill Broonzy's "When Will I Get to Be Called a Man?" and "Fighting for Dear Old Uncle Sam" by J. D. Short,<sup>271</sup> that African-American contributions to the war effort did not weaken racial segregation.

Desperate for good war songs and contradicting its own advice to songwriters not to trivialize the enemy, the OWI singled out

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<sup>270</sup>Ben Arnold, Music and War: A Research and Information Guide, (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1993), 187.

<sup>271</sup>"U.S. Popular Music Collection, 1941-1945," Library of Congress; "Big Bill" Broonzy [William Lee Conley], an American blues singer who served in the army after WWI, had a powerful song delivery and driving rhythm but was not well known until the jazz revival of the late 1940s.

Spike Jones's recording of "Der Fuehrer's Face" for praise. This was a very successful novelty tune of 1942 about an admittedly unfunny man. Although a great deal was already known about Hitler's character, methods, and beliefs, the prewar tendency in the popular media to depict Hitler in comic caricatures persisted throughout most of the war. The cut of his hair and mustache, his mannerisms of speech and gesture, and his exaggerated boastfulness made the German leader a favorite model for humorists and impressionists for years. The enormity of Nazi inhumanity was hidden from full view until the Allied troops overran the interior of Europe and discovered the camps in which millions had been starved, tortured, and killed. "Der Fuehrer's Face," written by Oliver Wallace, a Disney studio composer, for the animated propaganda short film Donald Duck in Nutziland, sold over 200,00 records in its first month of release and was number five on the sheet music best-seller chart.<sup>272</sup> The song's melody was a parody of the "Horst Wessell Lied," a Nazi anthem. The tune was immediately picked up by many entertainers, but the most successful recording and live performances were by the group that introduced the number, Spike

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<sup>272</sup>"Disney Song 'Der Fuehrer's Face' Razzes Nazis with a German Band," Life, 2 Nov. 1942: 44; Thornton Delehanty, "The Disney Studio at War," Theatre Arts, Jan. 1943, vol. xxvii, no. 1: 31-39.

Jones and His City Slickers. One can only speculate on how this zany novelty song, notable for the Donald-Duck-type voicings, the employment of a rubber razzler following every mock "Heil" in the song to simulate a Bronx cheer, and the hint at homosexuality among the Fuehrer's followers (crafted by the vocal inflections of the singers at the lyrics "Super-doooper-super Men") improved on the romantic tunes the OWI disdained:

Ven der Fuehrer says, "Ve iss der Master Race!"  
 Ve heil! heil! right in der Fuehrer's face.  
 Not to love der Fuehrer iss a great disgrace,  
 So ve heil! heil! right in der Fuehrer's face.  
 Ven Herr Goebbels says, "Ve own der vorltd und space!  
 Ve heil! heil! right in Herr Goebbels' face.  
 Ven Herr Goering says, "Dey nefer bomb dis place!"  
 Ve heil! heil! right in Herr Goerings' face.  
 Are ve not der Super men? Aryan-pure Super Men?  
 "Ja! Ve iss der Super Men, Super-doooper-super men."  
 Iss dis Nazi land so goot--vould you leave it if you could?  
 "Ja! Dis Nazi land iss goot--ve would leave it if ve could."  
 Ve bring der vorltd New Order--  
 Heil Hilter's vorltd New Order!  
 Ef-ry one off foreign race,  
 Ve love der Fuehrer's face,  
 Ven ve bring to der vorltd dis(-)order.  
 (repeat first verse twice)<sup>273</sup>

Spike Jones's recording of "Der Fuehrer's Face" evidently found favor with the men in America's armed forces. A soldier on

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<sup>273</sup>Oliver Wallace, "Der Fuehrer's Face," (New York: Southern Music Publishing, Inc., 1942).



Ascension Island took three currently popular songs to task, "Long Ago and Far Away," ("tingling spines" reference), "The Music Goes Round and Round," and "As Time Goes By," ("woman needs man and man must have his mate" reference) when the serviceman wrote about Jones:

To us, Mr. Jones's orchestrations furnish a refreshing departure from Frank Sinatra's groaning and Andre Kostelanetz's symphonic sirup[sic]. . . .We need more of Mr. Jones's syncopated arrangements to keep us from believing in a sugar-plum world where everyone has a tingling spine and goes round and round. All is not as simple as 'woman needs man and man must have his mate.' Our ability to laugh at ourselves is an American tradition to be cherished. The world needs fewer Goerings and Himmlers and more guys like Jones.<sup>274</sup>

The OWI's anxiety concerning the failure of war songs was grounded in the nation's past. Americans had been singers, especially during World War I when group or community singing was considered as much a part of the nation's war effort as "rolling bandages, serving out coffee and cigarettes at canteens and knitting socks for soldiers."<sup>275</sup> There was also the consideration

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<sup>274</sup>Wanda Marvin, "V-Disks Help Hasten the Day," The Billboard 1944 Music Year Book," 30 Sept. 1944, vol.56, no. 38: 149.

<sup>275</sup>Samuel T. Williamson, "A Singing Army? Not Yet, But--," New York Times Magazine, 15 November 1942, 7: 12-13.

that group singing accustomed people to doing things in unison, and therefore, mass singing became an ally of military drill. In America's previous wars there were songs that seemed to be on the lips of every citizen. Now there seemed to be very little material published that captured the fancy of the public for longer than a few weeks, and the OWI complained that Tin Pan Alley did not seem to be doing its best for the war effort.

During World War II the music industry never quite caught fire as it had in 1917-1918. Only in World War I did the number of songs about war approximate those about love. At the onset of war in Europe in 1914, the vast majority of Americans, including President Woodrow Wilson, pledged the United States to neutrality. Although the United States did not enter the war as its inception, Americans were keenly aware of mounting tension in Europe and subsequent events on the front. Their interest was demonstrated by the popularity in 1915 of several British soldier songs, such as "Keep the Home Fires Burning" and "Pack Up Your Troubles in Your Old Kit- Bag and Smile, Smile , Smile." Wilson campaigned for re-election using the slogan, "He kept us out of war."<sup>276</sup> While Wilson and the country pretended that the United States could stay out of

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<sup>276</sup>Robert H. Ferrell, Woodrow Wilson & World War I, 1917-1921, (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1985), 1-14.

international conflicts, some songwriters knew better. In the campaign song, "Go Right Along, Mr. Wilson," written by A. Seymour Brown, it was clear that the words mirrored the isolationist mood of the country while subtly preparing the mood of the nation for war, asking people to make themselves ready while at the same time encouraging Wilson to make peace. New York City's Tin Pan Alley shared this. Still, Americans, many of them first-or second-generation citizens, torn between loyalty to their ancestral home and loyalty to their adopted one, prayed fervently for peace and sang such tunes as "Uncle Sam Won't Go to War," and "We Stand for Peace While Others War." In 1915, vaudeville star Norah Bayes (to the delight of the pacifists and isolationists) popularized the best-known of the antiwar songs "I Didn't Raise My Boy to Be a Soldier," by Alfred Bryan and Al Piantadosi. It capitalized on people's conflicts about sacrificing their children's lives for a war "over there":

Ten million soldiers to the war have gone,  
Who may never return again.  
Ten million mothers' hearts must break  
For the ones who died in vain.  
Head bowed down in sorrow,  
In her lonely years,  
I heard a mother murmur thro' her tears:

"I didn't raise my boy to be a soldier,  
I brought him up to be my pride and joy,  
Who dares to place a musket on his shoulder,

To shoot some other mother's darling boy?"  
 Let nations arbitrate their future troubles,  
 It's time to lay the sword and gun away,  
 There'd be no war today,  
 If mothers all would say,  
 "I didn't raise my boy to be a soldier."<sup>277</sup>

Bryan's and Piantadosi's song was countered with the staunch patriotism and willingness to protect home and country by such tunes as: "What if George Washington's Mother Had Said, I Didn't Raise My Boy to Be a Soldier," "America, I Love You," "We'll Never Let Our Flag Fall," and "In Time of Peace Prepare for War." The latter tune showed that Americans were indeed aware of the inevitable course of the events.<sup>278</sup>

Gradually, over the next two years, the public attitude altered. People's hopes for peace dimmed as the incidents of threats to American shipping and meddling in American affairs escalated. Outrage and hatred were chronicled in the song, "When the Lusitania Went Down." The Lusitania, a U.S. passenger liner, had been sunk by a German submarine on 1 May 1915. Still, the songwriters urged

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<sup>277</sup>Alfred Bryan and Al. Piantadosi, "I Didn't Raise My Boy to Be a Soldier," (New York: Leo Feist, Inc., 1915).

<sup>278</sup>Dick Stern, ed. Those Wonderful Years: Unforgettable Songs from 1900-1920, (New York: The Big 3 Music Corporation, 1985), 18.

peace with songs like, "The Hero of the European War," which praised Wilson for keeping America out of the war, and "Don't Forget That He's Your President," a plea to stand by the president's neutrality position. Nora Bayes also congratulated the president, in song, for keeping the country out of war with her successful rendition of "We Take Our Hats Off to You, Mr. Wilson," written by teenager, Blanche Merrill.<sup>279</sup> By 1916 German attacks on United States shipping and America's economic and cultural ties with Great Britain and France made neutrality more difficult.<sup>280</sup>

Former president Theodore Roosevelt mocked "I Didn't Raise My Boy to Be a Soldier," and claimed the song should be rewritten as "I'm Glad I Raised My Boy to Be a Soldier." Ironically, Roosevelt would lose a son in World War I.<sup>281</sup> Former president, Theodore Roosevelt, with his jingoistic enthusiasm and buoyant speaking style, led increasing numbers of Americans insistent on military

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<sup>279</sup>Jeffrey C. Livingston, "'Still Boy-Meets-Girl Stuff': Popular Music and War," America's Musical Pulse: Popular Music in Twentieth-Century Society. Kenneth J. Bindas, ed., (Westport, CN: Greenwood Press, 1992), 33.

<sup>280</sup>Ferrell, Woodrow Wilson & World War I, 1-14.

<sup>281</sup>Livingston, "'Still Boy-Meets-Girl Stuff,'" in Bindas, America's Musical Pulse, 33.

preparedness. Tin Pan Alley joined the effort with "Wake Up America!"<sup>282</sup>

With Woodrow Wilson promising to make the world safe for democracy and telling one of his aides, "My message today was a message of death for our young men," the United States declared war against the Central Powers on 6 April 1917.<sup>283</sup> Americans rallied behind the government and the war, and Tin Pan Alley helped lead the way with hundreds of songs supporting the war.<sup>284</sup>

Between April 1917 and November 1918, when the war ended, Tin Pan Alley produced more songs than during any other comparable period in history.<sup>285</sup> No American war, with the possible exception of the Civil War, yielded as many martial tunes as did the Great

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<sup>282</sup>"United States Popular Music Collection, 1914-1919," Fine Arts (Music) Reading Room, Music and Recorded Sound Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. (hereinafter cited as "U.S. Popular Music Collection, 1914-1919," Library of Congress).

<sup>283</sup>Ferrell, Woodrow Wilson & World War I, 1-14.

<sup>284</sup>"U.S. Popular Music Collection, 1914-1919," Library of Congress.

<sup>285</sup>Livingston, "'Still Boy-Meets-Girl Stuff,'" in Bindas, America's Musical Pulse, 34.

War, nor has any war added such numbers of sentimental songs to the permanent repertory of American popular song.

Immediately, popular music reflected and capitalized on the new national mood. Tin Pan Alley had developed into an efficient machine. If the country demanded a particular type of song, the Alley could produce it. And the demand for war songs was phenomenal.

Tin Pan Alley also responded to the government's encouragement. The official propaganda agency, the Committee on Public Information (CPI), headed by George Creel, believed that singing was vital to the war effort, and agitated for composition of martial tunes. Creel did not go so far as to outline song topics or suggest how Tin Pan Alley writers should go about their business, but he made his presence and desires for war songs known. The Committee on Public Education also distributed song books and dispatched song leaders to theaters around the country to lead people in group singing of war songs. The military distributed song books in camps and commissioned special officers to lead singing. Another indication of how important the government thought music was to the war effort was that despite paper rationing, music publishers continued to receive their full quota of paper for printing sheet music, although the traditional large format gave

way to the standard page size used today with some smaller and minature sizes also produced as conservation efforts.<sup>286</sup>

Sheet music sales soared. Sales of one and two million copies of a song were not uncommon. One explanation for this sales boom is that there was a shortage of entertainment outside the home.

Many theaters, both vaudeville and legitimate, closed for want of fuel, power, and entertainers (many of whom were drafted).<sup>287</sup>

Americans' were compelled to entertain themselves, often around a family piano. People sang at community gatherings, in theaters, and at war bond rallies. Tin Pan Alley sponsored war song contests in movie theaters--before the advent of sound motion pictures--and several of World War I's best songs came from these venues.

"Till We Meet Again," a song of parting and reunion, had a sheet music cover which depicted a soldier bidding a touching farewell to his lady love before going off to war. It won first-prize in a Detroit movie theater song contest, after the composer's wife retrieved it from the trash and convinced him to enter it in the

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<sup>286</sup>Stephen Vaughn, Holding Fast the Inner Lines: Democracy, Nationalism, and the Committee on Public Information, (Chaple Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1980), 187-195; David Ewen, Great Men of American Popular Song, (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1972), 260-261.

<sup>287</sup>*ibid.*



contest. "Till We Meet Again " became a sentimental, nostalgic standard in popular music for the next fifty years:<sup>288</sup>

Smile the while you kiss me sad adieu,  
When the clouds roll by I'll come to you.  
Then the skies will seem more blue,  
Down in lovers' lane my dearie.  
Wedding bells will ring so merrily,  
Every tear will be a memory.  
So wait and pray each night for me,  
Till We Meet Again.<sup>289</sup>

Without radio or television to bring the horrors of battle into the home, Americans in the months between April 1917 and November 1918 still held to an old-fashioned, romantic view of war. A majority of World War I songs were martial and at the same time romantic in spirit. In these songs, the soldiers were handsome, brave, and noble, while the fragile women at home waited patiently and lovingly for them. For example, the refrain of "I Cannot Bear to Say Goodbye," says, "I cannot bear to say goodbye/I cannot bear to see you cry/For I am going 'over there'/Because I want to do my share/ I'll keep your image in my

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<sup>288</sup>ibid., 261.

<sup>289</sup>Raymond B. Egan and Richard A. Whiting, "Till We Meet Again," (New York: Remick Music Corp., 1918).

heart/And pray we'll never have to part."<sup>290</sup> Other sentimental songs such as "Somewhere a Heart Is Breaking and Calling Me Back to You," "I Called You My Sweetheart," and "Before the World Began" were popular sellers.<sup>291</sup> One of the most famous of the sentimental tunes of the Great War was "Blue Bell." Although originally published in 1904, the song was revived in 1917 with new cover art which depicted a U.S. Infantryman bidding farewell to his love, who was dressed in white and standing in a flower-filled meadow at sunrise. "Blue Bell" was a song which captured the rampant romanticism associated with World War I tunes:

Blue Bell the dawn is waking  
 Sweetheart you must not sigh,  
 Blue Bell my heart is breaking  
 I've come to say goodbye.  
 Hear how the bugle's calling  
 Calling to each brave heart,  
 Sweetheart your tears are falling  
 Blue Bell, we two must part.

Goodbye my Blue Bell,  
 Farewell to you  
 One last fond look into your eyes so blue  
 'Mid campfires gleaming

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<sup>290</sup>Anita Owen, "I Cannot Bear to Say Goodbye," (New York: Waterson, Berlin & Snyder, 1918).

<sup>291</sup>"U.S. Popular Music Collection, 1914-1919," Library of Congress.

"Mid shot and shell  
I will be dreaming of my own Blue Bell."<sup>292</sup>

Representative of the militant-style song was the war's biggest hit, George M. Cohan's exhilarating "Over There." Written the day after Wilson signed the declaration of war and introduced at a Red Cross benefit at the Hippodrome in New York City in the fall of 1917, the catchy ditty warned that America was on its way to straighten out the trouble in Europe. The tune sold more than one million records and two million copies of sheet music. Norah Bayes promoted "Over There," herself, becoming a musical symbol of America's turn from neutralism to war. It was recorded by many singers, including the great opera star Enrico Caruso. Among the different sheet music cover illustrations for the successive printings of the song, Norman Rockwell's depiction of young soldiers gathered around a campfire, singing heartily while one of the boys plays a banjo is striking for its depiction of innocence. These young men could be at summer camp instead of an army training site. The caption above the song's name on the title page salutes "Over There" as "Your Song--My Song--Our Boys' Song." The words were simple, and the catchy tune was easy to remember:

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<sup>292</sup>Edward Madden and Theodore E. Morse, "Blue Bell," (New York: F.B. Haviland Publishing Co., Inc., 1904).

Johnnie get your gun, get your gun, get your gun,  
 Take it on the run, on the run, on the run;  
 Hear them calling you and me;  
 Ev'ry son of liberty.  
 Hurry right away, no delay, go today,  
 Make your daddy glad, to have had such a lad,  
 Tell your sweetheart not to pine,  
 To be proud her boy's in line.

CHORUS:

Over there, over there,  
 Send the word, send the word over there,  
 That the Yanks are coming,  
 The Yanks are coming,  
 The drums rum-tumming everywhere  
 So prepare, say a pray'r  
 Send the word, send the word, to beware,  
 We'll be over, We're coming over,  
 And we won't come back till it's over Over There.<sup>293</sup>

Cohan, long known as an ardent patriot, donated all of his royalties from the song to war charities. Its impact on the country did not go unnoticed in high places, for it eventually earned him a congressional medal by a special act of Congress.<sup>294</sup>

The classic "Mademoiselle from Armentieres (Parley-Vous)" (also known as "Hinky Dinky, Parley-Voo") was popular in the armed

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<sup>293</sup>George M. Cohan, "Over There," (New York: Leo Feist, Inc., 1917).

<sup>294</sup>Lynn Wenzal & Carol J. Binkowski, I Hear America Singing: A Nostalgic Tour of Popular Sheet Music, (New York: Crown Publishers, Inc., 1989), 74.

forces, while on the homefront many tunes portrayed the life of the common soldier. There were songs that spoke of the war in terms of the "country" boys who fought: "Goodbye, Ma; goodbye, Pa/Goodbye mule with your old he-haw/I do not know what this war is all about/But you can bet, by god, I shall soon find out."<sup>295</sup>

Songs were often humorous, such as "Good Morning Mr. Zip; Zip, Zip," by Robert Lloyd--with its refrain: "Ashes to ashes, dust to dust/ If the Camels don't get you/The Fatimas must."<sup>296</sup> Also popular as a novelty song was Sidney D. Mitchell's and Archie Gottler's "Would You Rather Be a Colonel with An Eagle on Your Shoulder, or a Private with a Chicken on Your Knee?"--a song that extolled the life of enlisted men and their ability to attract women. Irving Berlin's all-soldier musical revue, Yip, Yip Yaphank, viewed the war from a soldier's perspective (in a stateside training camp). The million-copy seller from the show, "Oh, How I Hate to Get Up in the Morning," spoke of doing away with the company bugler in these terms, "I'll amputate his reveille/And step upon it heavily/And

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<sup>295</sup>C. Francis Reisner, Benny Davis, and Billy Baskette, "Goodbye Broadway, Hello France," (New York: Leo Fesit, Inc., 1917).

<sup>296</sup>Robert Lloyd, "Good Morning Mr. Zip, Zip, Zip," (New York: Leo Feist, Inc., 1918).

spend the rest of my life in bed."<sup>297</sup> It became the most popular song of the show and went on to become an American standard.<sup>298</sup>

There was a somber side to the war songs. The most popular ballad, "Till We Meet again," sold several million copies of sheet music, as did the British best-selling "Keep the Home Fires Burning ('Til the Boys Come Home)," by Lena Guilbert Ford and Ivor Novello. The latter spoke of silver linings in dark clouds, giving "our glorious laddies" to do their best, and defeating tyrants all for the "sacred call of a Friend [Belgium]."<sup>299</sup> It was reported that Woodrow Wilson liked singing Zo Elliott's "There's a Long, Long Trail" with his family after dinner.<sup>300</sup> Curiously, the song made no mention of the war. Its lyrics spoke of a "land of my dreams" and of going down "that long, long, trail with you." The only possible connection with the World War was the lyric, "There's a long, long

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<sup>297</sup>Irving Berlin, "Oh! How I Hate to Get Up in the Morning," (New York: Waterson, Berlin, & Snyder, Co., 1918).

<sup>298</sup>Ewen, Great Men of American Popular Song, 261.

<sup>299</sup>Lena Guilbert Ford and Ivor Novello, "Keep the Home Fire Burning," (London: Ascherberg, Hopwood, and Crew, Ltd., 1915).

<sup>300</sup>Livingston, "'Still Boy-Meets-Girl Stuff,'" in Bindas, America's Musical Pulse, 34.

time of waiting/Until my dreams all come true," possibly alluding to an enforced period of separation between a soldier and his girl. Many songs were maudlin, like the tearjerker by Bernie Grossman and Ray Lawrence, "Just a Baby's Letter Found in No Man's Land," the saga of a small child's letter to her soldier father discovered by another soldier on the battlefield.

Tin Pan Alley avoided antiwar themes. Despite this, censors did ban some songs as being injurious to the war effort, for example: "I Don't Want to Get Well--I'm in Love with a Beautiful Nurse." A portion of the chorus states: "I'm glad they shot me fighting on the line/The Doctor says that I'm in bad condition but/ Oh, oh, oh, I've got so much ambition/I don't want to get well /For I'm having a wonderful time."<sup>301</sup> The tune "There'll Be a Hot Time for the Old Men When the Young Men Go to War" and a few other bawdy lyrics were also banned on the grounds they encouraged draft evasion and desertion.<sup>302</sup>

The German kaiser, unlike Adolph Hitler, was the subject of hundreds and hundreds of World War I tunes. (The closest Irving

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<sup>301</sup>Harry Pease, Howard Johnson, and Harry Jentes, "I Don't Want to Get Well," (New York: Leo Feist, Inc., 1917).

<sup>302</sup>Livingston, "'Still Boy-Meets-Girl Stuff,'" in Bindas, America's Musical Pulse, 34.

Berlin came to an anti-Hitler song was entitled "When That Man Is Dead and Gone.") The majority of these were variations on a theme regarding the dire fate that awaited the kaiser when the Americans prevailed. He would be hanged under a linden tree or from a sour apple tree; he would be whipped, stomped, or killed. One of the most flamboyant songs pictured the kaiser in his coffin with a lily in his hand. Some of the song titles illustrate the songwriters' views: "The Crazy Kaiser," "Hunting the Hun," "I'd Like to See the Kaiser with a Lily in His Hand," "The Kaiser Is the Devil," "We Don't Want Bacon, What We Want Is a Piece of the Rhine," "We're Going to Knock the 'Hel' Out of Wilhelm--and It Won't Take Us Long," "When the Kaiser Does the Goose-Step to a Good Old American Rag," "If He Can Fight Like He Can Love, Good Night, Germany," and "Goodbye Germany."<sup>303</sup> These songs were created both to ridicule and to inspire hate. Many of the sheet music covers carried cartoon-like depictions of the Kaiser, portraying him as a soldier buffoon. The lyrics left nothing to the imagination.

There were songs in praise of the Allies: "Joan of Arc They Are Calling You," "Goodbye Broadway, Hello France," "Lafayette, We Hear You Calling," and "My Belgium Rose;" songs for the homefront: "We'll

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<sup>303</sup>"U.S. Popular Music Collection, 1914-1919," Library of Congress.



Do Our Share While You're Over There," and "Keep Cool, The Country's Saving Fuel"; and songs of loneliness and parting: "I May Be Gone for a Long, Long Time," "When the Flag of Peace Is Waving, I'll Return," and "I Cannot Bear to Say Goodbye." There were songs of patriotism such as, "If I Had a Son for Each Star in Old Glory," "God Spare Our Boys Over There," "Keep the Home Push Up for Pershing," "You'll Find Old Dixieland in France," "You Can Tell He's an American," "Women of the Homeland," "When a Blue Service Star Turns to Gold," "Just Like Washington Crossed the Delaware, General Pershing Will Cross the Rhine," "Liberty Bell It's Time to Ring Again," and "Uncle Sammy."<sup>304</sup>

There were new pocket-sized song books selling for fifteen cents that contained standard patriotic songs such as Songs of Cheer: for Camp, Fireside, Liberty & Community Singing, Songs the Soldiers and Sailors Sing, and Liberty Songs: Adapted for Camp, Home & Community Singing. These song books claimed to be the "song book[s] of America," and expressed the "soul of America's wartime spirit in songs of cheer." The books asserted that the songs contained therein were the songs "our boys sing when they march away--the choruses they sing in the trench and dugout over

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<sup>304</sup>Ibid.

there--the songs they'll sing when they come marching home to victory." The songs were "chock full of ammunition for building morale at the Front and at Home." Songbooks usually contained the national anthems of the Allies ("Belgian National Hymn," "God Save the King," "Italian National Hymn," "Marseilles" and "The Star Spangled Banner"), other patriotic tunes such as "Battle Hymn of the Republic," "America," and "Battle Cry of Freedom," as well as popular favorites of the day: "K-K-K-Katy," "Darktown Strutters' Ball," and "Hail, Hail, the Gang's All Here." Advertisements for Songs of Cheer urged buyers to send copies to boys or friends in the service in France or in training camp since, "Uncle Sam's is a singing army" and this songbook is just what "his battling nephews want." This very attitude that America's was a singing army and that singing contributed to its victory in World War I haunted Tin Pan Alley as it aspired to repeat the success of "Over There" in the Second World War.<sup>305</sup>

During World War I the government could not have asked for a better presentation from popular music. Tin Pan Alley wholeheartedly responded to the government's call. War songs comprised part of a broad government-wide crusade that by mid-

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<sup>305</sup>ibid.

1918 nearly eradicated most organized opposition to the war.<sup>306</sup>

The end of the war found most of Tin Pan Alley and its fellow Americans anxious to return to life as it functioned before the war. One song of the day, "Wilson, Democracy, and the Red, White, and Blue," by an Army private in the medical corps, congratulated the United States for restoring peace and showing, "The pen's mightier than the sword":

The war in France now is over  
The boys will soon be sailing home  
To live in America's clover  
For peace lies over the foam.  
Cause victory rests on their shoulders  
Along with the red, white and blue  
America's proud of her soldiers  
And, Wilson we're proud of you.

Wilson, democracy, the red, white and blue  
We owe our victory all to you  
Kultur is done, democracy won  
Hip, hip Hurrah for the U.S.A.  
So let's give three cheers for "Old Glory"  
For she's been tried and true  
And the Army and Navy forever  
With Wilson, democracy, the red, white and blue.<sup>307</sup>

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<sup>306</sup>Livingston, "Still Boy-Meets-Girl Stuff," in Bindas, America's Musical Pulse, 34.

<sup>307</sup>William H. Hollingsworth, "Wilson, Democracy, and the Red, White and Blue," (Kansas City, Missouri: Howard Publishing Co., 1918).

Shortly after the armistice ending the First World War, 11 November 1918, the deluge of war song manuscripts declined to a trickle. The public seemed so anxious to erase the war from memory that vaudeville house managers in 1919, sensing the shift in the public's mood, tacked up signs prohibiting war songs.<sup>308</sup>

The disillusionment many Americans experienced following the postwar failure of President Wilson's new world order at the Versailles Peace Conference, returned in 1939 when Nazi aggression thrust Europe into war. Americans were divided between isolationists, who wanted to keep the United States from becoming involved in Europe's troubles, and interventionists, who tried to aid the French and British and prepare the country for eventual entry into the war.<sup>309</sup>

American music was also divided before Pearl Harbor. A group of folk-style, urban musicians--with ties to the Communist party--created a small following in New York and Detroit. These musicians hoped to use songs as ideological weapons to persuade

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<sup>308</sup>Livingston, "'Still Boy-Meets-Girl Stuff,'" in Bindas, America's Musical Pulse, 35.

<sup>309</sup>James MacGregor Burns, Roosevelt: The Lion and the Fox, (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1956), 380 passim; William E. Leuchtenburg, Franklin Roosevelt and the New Deal, 1932-1940, (New York: Harper & Row, 1963), 197 passim.

Americans to stay out of the war in Europe. The best known of these folksingers was a group called The Almanac Singers. The Almanacs shifted personnel frequently, but were composed, at one time or another, of Woody Guthrie, Pete Seeger, Lee Hays, Ronnie Gilbert, Millard Lampell, Allen Sloane, Beth Lomax, Arthur Stern, Butch Hawes, Brownie McGee, Charley Polachek, and Sis Cunningham. Other singers, such as Burl Ives and Will Geer, came and went. In spring 1941 the Almanacs released their strongly worded album, Songs for John Doe.<sup>310</sup> The songs left little room for compromise or loose interpretation. They were openly hostile to the capitalist system, insulting to the United States government and public figures, and purposefully inflammatory. The song "Washington Breakdown" illustrates the point:

J.P. Morgan is big and plump,  
 84 inches around the rump,  
 Around the rump, the rump, the rump,  
 84 inches around the rump.  
 Wendell Willkie and Franklin D.,  
 Seems to me they both agree,  
 They both agree on killing me.<sup>311</sup>

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<sup>310</sup>R. Serge Denisoff, Great Day Coming: Folk Music and the American Left, (Urbana, Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 1971), 100.

<sup>311</sup>Almanac Singers, "Washington Breakdown," Songs for John Doe, (New York: American Peace Mobilization, 1941).

The song "The Ballad of October 16" received wide coverage in the press and excerpts from it were published later when the Almanacs were under attack from the New York dailies. The Selective Service Training Act, which registered 16,500,000 American men between the ages of twenty-one and thirty-five years of age, was the subject of "The Ballad of October 16"--the date in 1940 when this first-ever peacetime military conscription went into effect:

It was on a Saturday night and the moon was shining  
bright,  
They passed the Conscription bill.  
And the people they did say for many miles away,  
T'was the president and his boys on Capitol Hill.

Chorus:  
Oh Franklin Roosevelt told the people how he felt,  
We damned near believed what he said.  
He said "I hate war and so does Eleanor but  
We won't be safe till everybody's dead."<sup>312</sup>

One of the most devastating of the Songs for John Doe was by Allen Sloane, "Plow Under." It was decidedly opposed to intervention in Europe and also cautioned Americans against using militarism as a way out of economic depression:

They said our system wouldn't work,  
Until we killed the surplus off,

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<sup>312</sup>Almanac Singers, "The Ballad of October 16th," Songs for John Doe, (New York: American Peace Mobilization, 1941).

So now they look at us and say. . .  
 Plow the fourth one under, plow under,  
 Plow under, plow under,  
 Plow under every fourth American boy.<sup>313</sup>

Following the attack on Pearl Harbor, the Almanacs reversed their antiwar position and began to write militant patriotic songs. One of the first songs, written in February 1942 by Pete Seeger, was entitled "Dear Mister President." It apologized to Roosevelt for Songs for John Doe:

Now I hate Hitler and I can tell you why,  
 He caused lots of good folks to suffer and die.  
 He's got a way of shoving folks around.  
 I figure it's time we slapped him down,  
 Give him a dose of his own medicine . . .  
 Lead poisoning.  
 Now Mister President, we haven't always agreed in  
     the past I know,  
 But that ain't at all important now,  
 What is important is what we got to do.  
 We got to lick Mr. Hitler, and until we do,  
 Other things can wait,  
 In other words, first we got a skunk to skin.

War means overtime and higher prices,  
 But we're all willing to make sacrifices,  
 Hell I'd even stop fighting with my mother-in-law,  
 We need her too, to win the war--old battle axe.

Now Mister President, you're commander-in-chief,  
     of our armed forces, ships and planes,  
 And the tanks and horses.

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<sup>313</sup>Almanac Singers, "Plow Under," Songs for John Doe, (New York: American Peace Mobilization, 1941)

Guess you know best just where I can fight,  
 All I want is to be situated right . . .  
 To do the most damage.  
 So what I want is for you to give me a gun,  
 And we can hurry up and get the job done.<sup>314</sup>

In 1942, the Almanacs recorded the album Dear Mr. President, and advertised it as "war songs for Americans." Besides the title song, there were five other new composition on the album: "Round and Round Hitler's Grave," "Deliver the Goods," "Belt Line Girl," "Side by Side," and "Reuben James." These songs were published in sheet music form by Bob Miller, and it seemed for a time that they might answer the question posed by Samuel Sillen in New Masses, "Why don't we have a good war song?" These songs seemed to fit Sillen's criteria:

We need songs not corn. Songs that make us burn and hate against the Fascist enemy. Songs that make us cheer the heroism of our armed forces. Songs of dignity and hope and courage. Fighting songs that rouse and rally. . . . The people are sick and tired of jerks and jeeps and oceanic caresses. Tin Pan Alley: business as usual with a few war angles thrown in.<sup>315</sup>

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<sup>314</sup>Almanac Singers, "Dear Mister President," Songs to Tear Hitler Down, (New York: New Theater League, 1942).

<sup>315</sup>Samuel Sillen, "Battle in Search of a Hymn," New Masses, 19 May 1942: 22-23.



After the Almanacs' songs began to urge all-out efforts to win the war, a larger audience was willing to accept their songs. Norwin Corbin, of the Columbia Broadcasting System (CBS), hired the Almanacs to sing on several radio programs that emphasized the war effort. They also sang to the Allied Armies overseas on short wave broadcasts produced by the Office of War Information. This wide exposure allowed the Almanacs to reach audiences beyond their usual devotees among union members, intellectuals, and leftists. It helped them gain an agent from the prestigious William Morris Agency, a contract with Decca Records, and an audition at New York's Rainbow Room in Rockefeller Center. The latter opportunity was ironic since John D. Rockefeller, the founder of the Center, had often been attacked as an immoral capitalist in the Almanacs's songs. To avoid being labeled as "Show Biz" and also declining to wear "Lil Abner" outfits when they performed, the Almanacs decided that the Rainbow Room was not the best showcase for their material.<sup>316</sup>

Although the Almanacs continued to support the war effort in song, their support was eroded by a series of articles published in New York newspapers beginning February 1942. The group's antiwar

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<sup>316</sup>Denisoff, Great Day Coming, 95-97.

past was exposed, including a song book they had produced for the American Peace Mobilization (a communist 'front' organization), along with details of the many rallies they had attended singing peace and anti-intervention songs. The Almanacs were accused of being disloyal to the United States. As the New York Times Herald said, "These [are] lads and lassies who, before Russia went to war against Germany, had nothing but the ugliest things to say about FDR, the Congress and other things American."<sup>317</sup> Following these newspaper attacks, the William Morris agent quit representing the group, their recording contract was nullified, and the Rainbow Room job offer was rescinded. The Almanacs's personnel continued to be fluctuate, but the group still performed.

The New York newspapers renewed their attack on the Almanacs on 4 January 1943, again citing pre-Pearl Harbor antiwar activities. The New York Times Herald said the group had gone from "peace singers" to "war minstrels." But the most serious issue in this article was the question of why the OWI had employed and still continued to employ these "subversives."<sup>318</sup> The next day, 5

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<sup>317</sup>"Four Almanacs Washed Up as OWI Singers," New York Times Herald, 4 Jan. 1943: 1.

<sup>318</sup>*ibid.*

January 1943, a New York Times article raised similar points about the Almanacs, but reported that the group was "no longer thumping out their alleged folk songs for the short wave propaganda service."<sup>319</sup> The Almanacs were especially criticized for their pro-labor songs performed on OWI programs. Songs that favored unions in conflict with management were seen as counterproductive to the drive for national unity. Retreating from an earlier position praising the Almanacs for writing and singing their militant war songs, the OWI now declared that it had been a mistake to hire the "hillbilly group." Leonard Carlton, in charge of the International Radio Bureau of OWI said, "We pulled a blunder. These boys are no longer doing broadcasts for us. We put on [oversee the content of] 2,500 programs a day [U.S. domestic and foreign broadcasts]. . . . It was natural that somebody should pull a blunder sometime." The Almanacs did not perform any of their anti-war or anti-government songs for OWI broadcasts, but they sang one tune about "everybody [having] joined the union" on a program saluting the state of Michigan. They had previously recorded songs that attacked Henry Ford and praised the C.I.O.'s victory over Ford Motors. Neither of these recordings was

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<sup>319</sup>"OWI Plows Under the Almanac Singers," New York Times, 5 Jan. 1943: 9.

broadcast by the OWI.<sup>320</sup> Shortly after the group was fired by the OWI, most of its members entered the military or joined in other war-related work. The Almanacs' firing might be considered an act of political expediency and not an act of thoughtful reasoning. For almost a year the singers had shown their ability to communicate with some groups of people that possibly had not been reached by media before--former union laborers who were now workers and soldiers for Uncle Sam. Despite the Almanacs' proven effectiveness, an OWI spokesman said, "They'll jolly well stay canned."<sup>321</sup> The OWI treatment of the Almanacs was just a hint of what lay in the future for folk entertainers: "blacklisting" in the late 1940s and 1950s as a result of the House Committee on UnAmerican Activities investigation of "Communism in motion pictures," under its chairman, Congressman J. Parnell Thomas.<sup>322</sup>

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<sup>320</sup>OWI: RG 208; Domestic Radio Bureau Records: SG 169, WNRC; "OWI Plows Under the Almanac Singers," New York Times, 5 Jan. 1943: 21; Denisoff, Great Day Coming, 99-104; Kenneth J. Bindas, ed., America's Musical Pulse: Popular Music in Twentieth-Century Society, (Westport, CN: Greenwood Press, 1992), 35.

<sup>321</sup>"Four Almanacs Washed Up as OWI Singers," New York Times Herald, 6 Jan. 1943: 1.

<sup>322</sup>David A. Cook, A Narrative History of Film, (New York: W.E. Norton & Company, 1981), 407-410.

The U.S. government, through the OWI, tried to inspire war song production, but the enormous number of war songs generated by Tin Pan Alley during World War I stands in direct contrast to the amount and popularity of war songs produced for World War II. The government was just as anxious for spirited, rousing war songs in World War II (if not more so), as it was in 1918. But the American public seemed uninterested in militant war songs, and after 1943, their numbers on the charts dropped sharply. The enthusiasm that pervaded World War I songs was missing; so far, World War II had no "Over There." A few energetic tunes like the lively "Don't Sit Under the Apple Tree (With Anyone Else but Me)" appeared, but more songs were wistful. "I Left My Heart at the Stage Door Canteen," by Irving Berlin, "When the Lights Go on again (All Over the World)," by Eddie Seiler, Sol Marcus, and Bennie Benjamin, and Frank Loesser's "Rodger Young," a folk ballad about a twenty-five-year-old soldier killed in the Solomon Islands, all focused on wartime tragedy and disrupted relationships. "Comin' in on a Wing and a Prayer," which reached number one on the general popularity charts in 1943, was the last of the songs with a real war background to make a significant showing.

Casting about for a scapegoat on which to blame the failure of stirring war songs, an OWI spokesman faulted the popular foxtrot

and swing rhythms for the lack of high-quality war songs and argued that the new rhythms were less conducive to stirring martial tunes than the one-and-two-steps of the 1910s.<sup>323</sup> The criteria OWI used to determine a war song was out of line with popular musical tastes, especially in the area of new dance rhythms which the public as well as the soldiers preferred. Soldiers were even known to execute their drills while whistling Glenn Miller tunes.<sup>324</sup>

What were these different dances and rhythms that caused so much anguish for war song composers? The fox trot is a ballroom dance that originated before World War I. Vernon and Irene Castle are credited with inventing this slow, simple dance in 2/4 time. (But a more likely source is the African-American band leader, James Reese Europe, who brought the dance to the Castle's attention.)<sup>325</sup> It was the leisurely, graceful tempo that presented such a problem for the OWI and the songs it wanted. People had a

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<sup>323</sup>OWI: RG 208; undated, unsigned memo from the office of the New York Deputy Chief, Domestic Radio Bureau: SG 169, WNRC.

<sup>324</sup>Billy Harrington, interviewed by the author, Natchitoches, LA, 30 May 1994.

<sup>325</sup>Arnold Shaw, Dictionary of American Pop/Rock, (New York: Schirmer Books, 1982), 132.

difficult time identifying lovely fox trot dance music with parades, marching soldiers, tanks, planes, and jeeps. But Americans had no trouble transferring their feelings about the war and its effect on their lives to these same popular songs.

The other rhythm found culpable in the matter of war song failure was "swing." Swing is a musical style that developed during the 1920s (Jelly Roll Morton is credited with the first use of the term in his "Georgia Swing," in 1928, and Duke Ellington wrote "It Don't Mean a Thing if It Ain't Got That Swing" in 1932). But it was not until 1935, when Benny Goodman played swing style at the Palomar Ballroom in Los Angeles and the Congress Hotel in Chicago that swing emerged as a nationwide form of popular music. Luckily for Goodman and his band, the Palomar was one of the first West Coast ballrooms to have a national network radio connection, and night after night the music and the dancers' enthusiasm for it were broadcast nationwide.<sup>326</sup>

Swing music had been the property of African-American dance bands and some white bands, such as the Dorsey brothers, but remained on the fringes of popular music until Goodman, in the words of Duke Ellington, had "done the right thing at the right time

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<sup>326</sup>Tony Palmer, All You Need Is Love: The Story of Popular Music, (New York: Grossman Publishers, 1976), 142-145.

in front of the right people." Goodman's popularity increased, and following a nationwide tour, he returned to New York to play a regular "live" show at the Paramount Theater between movie screenings from ten-thirty in the morning through the day and evening. At seven in the morning, teenagers were already lining up for the show, and when the band played between movies, the adolescents became so caught up in the music that they left their seats and began jitterbugging in the aisles.<sup>327</sup> This action sensationalized Goodman's appearances and caused worried adults to fear for the future of the nation. The spontaneity and reckless abandon with which teenagers joined swing music with dance was truly alarming. Here was the youth of America refusing to stay in their seats in a motion picture theater and ignoring the pleas of the management to stop dancing in the aisles. In some eyes this type of behavior was tantamount to anarchy.

Swing bands numbered about fifteen players with rhythm, brass, and reed sections. Some bands also included string sections, vocalists, or a singing group. Swing music was sensual; it often produced a physical reaction on the part of the listener and was always connected to dancing. It was hard to sit still when swing

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<sup>327</sup>*Ibid.*



music was playing. It consisted of a four-beat measure with a chugging-type of rhythm; the different instrument sections played call and response passages, and individual soloists improvised against set patterns from the band. Swing was a hybrid of an African-American musical style, namely jazz, with a more harmonious, less-threatening musical style middle-class, white Americans would accept and purchase. It was also a musical form many adults perceived as "garbage," a sentiment their children often did not share. The deviant aspects of the music stemmed not necessarily from the lyrics but from the structure and the loudness of the instrumental solos and the dance steps enacted by teenagers to "swing." Swing was also capable of what is termed "covering." This means that messages, themes, tonal structure, or rhythms were reworded, changed, or rewritten, so that a song an unacceptable minor musician was recorded by a major artist and thereby boosted into the mainstream of American culture.<sup>328</sup>

William Allen White of the America First Committee attacked swing as "blood raw emotion, without harmony, without consistent rhythm, and with no more tune than the yearful bellowings of a

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<sup>328</sup>R. Serge Denisoff and Mark H. Lewis, "The One Dimensional Approach to Popular Music: A Research Note," Journal of Popular Culture, vol. IV, no. 4, (Spring 1971), 912.

lonely, yearning and romantic cow in the pastures or the raucous staccatic meditation of a bulldog barking in a barrel." A Barnard College professor termed the dance music "musical Hitlerism."<sup>329</sup>

By the Second World War swing came to dominate American popular music, and most of the arguments against it disappeared. American youth was not, as some feared, led to rebellion by swing music. Instead, they marched or rode away to war humming swing tunes. Swing became synonymous with Americans. One young Dutch woman recalled the G.I.s entering her liberated town playing Glenn Miller's version of "St. Louis Blues": "I cried. I thought it was the most beautiful music I had ever heard. It was so bold, so brash, so American. It meant we were free."<sup>330</sup>

It was apparent to the OWI that criticizing swing was not going to produce war songs, so it looked for other areas of the entertainment business to chide for the undersupply of war songs. Although radio had offered its services to the nation, it did not escape the OWI's criticism. It noted that radio had become the primary transmitter of music, overshadowing dances, theaters, and

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<sup>329</sup>*Ibid.*, 132.

<sup>330</sup>Margarethe R. Bartholomew, interviewed by the author, Natchitoches, LA, 20 April 1994.

concerts; love songs already prevailed on the airwaves.<sup>331</sup> Radio was aware of this but did little to change its music broadcasting patterns. Other developments might be added to the list of reasons for a lack of a "proper" war song. Graphic radio, newsreel, and magazine reports from the battlefield made the naive exuberance of 1917-1918 impossible. A strike by the musicians' union in 1943 hindered instrumental recording. And Tin Pan Alley, though still huge, was no longer the sole source of white, mainstream popular music as it had been in World War I. Weakened by a fight between ASCAP and BMI over song licensing, and competing with swing, folk, and country, Tin Pan Alley could not flood the market with war songs. There was also a critical development in the music business. David Ewen states that Tin Pan Alley underwent "a major revolution" between World War I and II. Tin Pan Alley was no longer the "nursery in which composers could be developed," or a place where "songs were manufactured by the carload to meet every mood" or interest of the American public.<sup>332</sup> It was no longer

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<sup>331</sup>OWI: RG 208; Records of the Domestic Radio Bureau: SG 169, WNRC.

<sup>332</sup>Ewen, Great Men of American Popular Song, 261-262.

possible to promote a song to success by songplugging,<sup>333</sup> and most importantly, the music publishers had lost complete control of the product. The single most important factor of the "revolution" in Tin Pan Alley was that after 1930 most of the major publishing houses were acquired by motion-picture studios for their "all-talking, all-singing" productions.<sup>334</sup> The publishing

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<sup>333</sup>Songpluggers is a term derived from the era when music publishers introduced their songs through a systematic formula that was at the heart of Tin Pan Alley. Publishers became their own "pluggers." A "plugger"--originally a "boomer"--was a combined advanceman, advertising czar, con artist, and entertainer. Julie Witmark, E.B. Marks, Charles K. Harris, and Joseph Stern were four of the most famous songpluggers. In addition to their songwriting and publishing activities, they went from variety house to public theater to restaurant to burlesque show, bribing orchestras with drinks, greeting performers, giving out free songsheets, offering singers a percentage of profits on sheet-music sales, promising stars their pictures on sheet-music covers, and standing up and singing an extra chorus when their own song was on the bill. All this was to get their songs played more frequently, interpolated into shows, hummed by the public, and ultimately skyrocketed to hits through the sales of large quantities of sheet music. Pluggers often visited half-a-dozen establishments on a given evening, turning on their special brand of personal charm. Around the turn of the century, the songplugger blossomed into an incredibly important figure. Sales in excess of one million, a rarity before 1900, became frequent. Between 1900 and 1910, more than one hundred songs sold more than a million copies. Wenzel and Binkowski, 47-50.

<sup>334</sup>Ibid., 262.

houses became branches of movie studios, and the music publishers answered to the movie studio executives. Songs were written for specific films and not for independent release. There was little incentive for composers and lyricists to attempt to circumvent the studio system. Songs written to stand on their own were a "luxury" few could enjoy; most were composed on commission by musicians who were contracted to film studios.<sup>335</sup> Without the assembly-line method of song production that fueled Tin Pan Alley before 1930, it is easy to see how the yield of songs for World War II fell so drastically behind that of World War I.

The OWI had so much difficulty in finding popular militant war songs that appealed to the American public that it began to seek solutions on its own. The OWI said that active audience participation (going to dances to hear the latest music) was made passive by radio. The OWI even talked of getting Arthur Murray and Fred Astaire to invent a new style of dance so the United States would become "more oompah and militaristic."<sup>336</sup> The idea of inventing and popularizing a new dance explicitly to influence the

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<sup>335</sup>ibid.

<sup>336</sup>OWI: RG 208; memo 2696, Domestic Radio Bureau, Office of the Deputy Chief: SG 169, WNRC.

American public to think and behave in a more militaristic manner is an illustration of the extent to which the OWI was willing to go in order to wage a war that was "total" from both a social and cultural standpoint. During World War I, the government had been interested in the public's support of a military endeavor, but in World War II it wanted a commitment from the American people that extended to all levels of society and touched every aspect of American culture.

Despite gas rationing and curfews in some areas of the country, Americans went out to dances where they wanted to hear tunes they already knew from radio. New songs were introduced on the radio for maximum audience exposure. One record or live performance on radio reached a larger audience than a band could play to in a year's worth of concert and dance dates. The OWI recognized the power of radio to reach a large audience and formulated plans to aid songwriters in producing "proper" war songs and then to have them played on the air.

From its inception the OWI framed directives that offered guidelines for songwriters to aid them in the composition of "proper" war songs, and, in the public press, the OWI rebuked Tin Pan Alley for its uninterrupted production of "nostalgic" song-hits. Finally, the OWI decided to become directly involved with the music

business, and established the National Wartime Music Committee in November 1942, with representatives from each area of the federal government that had a need for music in any form. The National Wartime Music Committee was organized to seek out and pass judgment on the suitability of "morale" tunes for civilian and military use.<sup>337</sup>

The National Wartime Music Committee's function, according to a memorandum from OWI Domestic Radio Bureau Chief William B. Lewis to Merritt W. Barnum of the OWI's Domestic Radio Bureau in New York City, was purely advisory. It would: 1) Answer inquiries from private interests in the United States which might cooperate with the government in arranging wartime popular music for radio and films for both military and civilian use; American music for foreign language groups; community sing-a-longs; contributions made by individual musicians, orchestras, opera companies, and choral societies; compositions by classical music composers (both in and out of the service); folk music; music in schools and colleges; and United Nations music. 2) Coordinate all of the music programs used by government agencies in the war effort (war bond rallies, victory garden, and scrap collection drives), so that these

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<sup>337</sup>OWI: RG 208; Records of the Domestic Radio Bureau, National Wartime Music Committee Guidelines: SG 169, WNRC.

separate programs would be of mutual benefit to the different agencies. 3) Channel all requests for commercial use of music by government agencies through the National Wartime Music Committee to prevent duplication of effort or to prevent confusion--for example in the area of music copyrights. 4) Survey government operations, both domestic and abroad, to discern what agreements, contracts, policies, and procedures were already in effect with civilian musicians or composers and publishers.<sup>338</sup> Especially crucial were agreements between the government and the Music Publishers' Protective Association, the Songwriters' Protective Association, the American Federation of Musicians, the American Guild of Musical Artists, the American Federation of Radio Artists, the Screen Actors' Guild, the Radio Writers' Guild, and the various Victory Committees--such as the Songwriters' Victory Committee, the Publishers' Victory Committee, and the Writers' Victory Committee--established throughout areas of specialization in the music business by private citizens to work for the war effort. Eventually, after the initial organization period, it was hoped that the National Wartime Music Committee would be

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<sup>338</sup>OWI: RG 208, National Wartime Music Committee; letter and memorandum from William B. Lewis to Merritt W. Barnum, 13 Jan. 1943; National Wartime Music Committee Guidelines: SG 169, WNRC.



able to standardize practices which would lead to uniformity in government dealings with music industry groups. This standardization of practices never materialized as the government could not finalize its plans before the music industry developed its own standards and practices which it utilized for the duration of the war. To deal with the problems brought on by the enormity of such groups, subcommittees were devised which consisted of experts in the various music industry fields. There were committees that researched copyrights, that coordinated radio announcements, that met in various cities around the nation to encourage songwriters in the quest for the "proper" war song, that met with government officials to determine musical needs of those departments most concerned with the war: State, War, Navy, and Treasury. The OWI had National Wartime Music Committee members in New York, Los Angeles, and Washington, D.C. The function of the National Wartime Music Committee was purely advisory; it did not initiate any programs or operate any music projects.<sup>339</sup>

In an attempt to work with the OWI in its efforts to enlist Tin Pan Alley and Hollywood in the war music effort (and not content to wait for the federal government to act in the search for the Great

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<sup>339</sup>ibid.

American War Song), the American Theater Wing formed the War Music Committee in May 1943. This was a group of independent Broadway businessmen, Hollywood and popular lyricists, and composers. They were separate from the National Wartime Music Committee of the OWI. Almost immediately it was decided that the names of the Theater Wing's War Music Committee and the Office of War Information's National Wartime Music Committee resembled each other too closely, and so the American Theater Wing changed its music committee's name to the Music War Committee.<sup>340</sup>

The purpose of the American Theater Wing's Music War Committee was to promote the composition and marketing of "proper" war songs. Their declaration was: "Forget about 6/8 tempos and WWI. Today's songwriters should stop writing for the 1917 war. They should adapt their patriotic and military ideas to the 1943 pattern of show business and showmanship."<sup>341</sup> The popular music industry echoed the sentiments of others who believed the United States had to turn from the thinking of World War I, when fewer sacrifices and less participation in the winning

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<sup>340</sup>"Songwriters Own Positive Approach to War Song Problem Shelves OWI Hypo; MWC Jumping All Hurdles," *Variety*, 26 May 1943, vol. 150, no. 11: 1.

<sup>341</sup>*Ibid.*

the war were required of American society. During World War II, this "total war" thinking was to encompass all of society--every phase of American life was to be connected in some way, however small, to winning the war. Popular music was no exception. The OWI was insistent on dedicated participation and the musicians of Tin Pan Alley were more than happy to give it.

The Music War Committee's (MWC) instructions to its fellow members of the popular music industry were in tandem with the OWI's approach to wartime melodies: 1) The MWC urged members to assume a positive approach to their writing. "Forget the frustration of the 'Maybe I will lose my girl' or 'Is my girl back home two-timing me?' songs" 2) Also, songwriters should not fret about the "lights going out all over Europe, but sing of victory."<sup>342</sup>

Prior to this time, Oscar Hammerstein II, president of the American Theater Wings' Music War Committee, had been soundly criticized by the OWI for his song, "The Last Time I Saw Paris." It was deemed "far too pessimistic," although the song was released in 1940 before the United States entered World War II. Despite the criticism, "The Last Time I Saw Paris," dedicated to the English songwriter, Noel Coward, won the Academy Award in 1941 for Best

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<sup>342</sup>OWI: RG 208; Records of the Domestic Radio Bureau; American Theater Wing's Music War Committee: SG 169, WNRC.

Song and became a best selling record by Kate Smith.<sup>343</sup> It was an immensely popular song, but with the formation of the Music War Committee a change of musical direction was espoused at the highest levels of Broadway and Tin Pan Alley. Hammerstein and his fellow MWC members were primed to write and encourage war songs that were positive and uplifting, not sad or wistful like "The Last Time I Saw Paris."

Other writers such as E.Y. "Yip" Harburg and Ira Gershwin tried to rally the troops and the civilians with "If That's Propaganda (Make the Most of It)." Irving Berlin led the search for relevant contemporary songs as previously mentioned. He also wrote patriotic numbers for the movie Holiday Inn, including the "Freedom Song," whose lyrics are a listing of the Bill of Rights. This was a direct inspiration not only from the war, but also from President Roosevelt's "Four Freedoms," which had been immortalized in song as well as in a series of paintings by Norman Rockwell that graced the cover of the Saturday Evening Post and were later made into

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<sup>343</sup>OWI: RG 208; Domestic Radio Bureau: SG 169, WNRC; Nat Shapiro, Popular Music: An Annotated Index of American Popular Songs, Volume 2, (New York: Adrian Press, 1964), 32.

propaganda posters for the homefront.<sup>344</sup> It was the film Holiday Inn that first introduced "White Christmas," often mentioned as the ideal wartime song, to the American public.

The American Theater Wing's Music War Committee was a group of composers who considered themselves a musical melting pot which, through song, idealized American democracy for its ability to eliminate racial and ethnic discrimination. In the eyes of the MWC, all Americans participated in this musical society on an equal basis, leading to the eradication of class differences. Two meccas of entertainment for servicemen, founded by the American Theater Wing and aided by the Music War Committee, were instrumental in fostering the notion of an idealized America--at least musically. The Stage Door Canteen in the basement of Broadway's Forty-fourth Street Theater in New York City was founded in 1942 by the American Theatre Wing,<sup>345</sup> and the Hollywood Canteen was founded

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<sup>344</sup>Richard Fehr and Frederick G. Vogel, Lullabies of Hollywood: Movie Music and the Movies Musical, 1915-1992, (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, Inc., Publishers, 1993), 180.

<sup>345</sup>OWI: RG 208; American Theater Wing's War Music Committee: SG 169, WNRC.

by Bette Davis and John Garfield in early 1943.<sup>346</sup> The Canteens were constantly in the news because entertainers and other show business luminaries came nightly to entertain the crowds of service men and women. The Canteens were open every night from nine o'clock until midnight and there was no charge for admission. Everything was free if a person wore a uniform. Female entertainers danced with anyone who asked them, served coffee and donuts, and listened to the men's stories. Both the Stage Door Canteen and the Hollywood Canteen represented stellar democracy. Music at these canteens reinforced the democratic message. The most popular tunes of the day were always on the agenda, and any musical request a serviceman made was honored. Men of all races, all branches of the armed forces and all ranks, officers and enlisted men alike, were welcomed in these Canteens. The music was designed to appeal to the young servicemen. This meant no marches, no patriotic tunes, and no religious music. This made it very difficult for any of the "proper " war songs supported by the OWI or the Music War Committee to gain support from servicemen. What they wanted was music to dance to, and the bands supplied

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<sup>346</sup>Entertaining the Troops: American Entertainers in World War II, a video, dir. Robert Mugge, RCA/Columbia Pictures Home Video, 1992.

plenty.<sup>347</sup> The Billboard was of the opinion that "our current pops are far removed from the boys' present experiences and our 'war songs' have no reality to lads who are learning how to annihilate Fascists, so they get their belts from the solid stuff [swing and jazz]." <sup>348</sup> The Billboard speculated that the musicians in the service who had been members of lesser-known dance bands--the so-called "Mickey Mouse bands, sometimes called "sweet bands" such as Sammy Kaye's, Kay Kyser's, and Guy Lombardo's--before the war might be "indulging themselves in forbidden fruit and are off on a jazz kick and pushing it for all it's worth."<sup>349</sup> And although servicemen were content with such music, the OWI and others prominent in the war effort on the homefront did not think swing tunes and love songs conducive to high morale and a strong fighting

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<sup>347</sup>Carl Van Vechten, "An Ode to the Stage Door Canteen," Theatre Arts, April 1943, vol. xxvii, no. 4, : 229-231. Van Vechten states: "The place is absolutely democratic . . . English soldiers, sailors and RAF men dance beside, mingle and eat with Chinese airmen, Americans from every branch of the service, including Negroes and Indians, Canadians, Australians, South Africans, Dutch and French sailors [and] occasionally Russians."

<sup>348</sup>"Doughboys Like It Hot: Jazz Records, Orchestrations in demand; Sad Stuff Fluffed," The Billboard, 10 Oct. 1942, vol. 54, no. 41: 21.

<sup>349</sup>*Ibid.*

spirit. Tabulating the number of swing tunes favored by servicemen on The Billboard's popularity charts, it is evident that servicemen thought swing well-suited to sustaining their morale. Swing was the music they wanted to hear whether live, on the radio, or on records.

Why was it so difficult to find a war song that filled the requirements of the OWI and the public? First, it is necessary to take a closer look at the revolution in the music business between the two world wars and the changing technology which stimulated a profound alteration in America's musical environment. Improved technology, such as the electric phonograph and radio, made musical innovations instantaneously recognizable and commonplace. An American with a radio could hear new songs and new musical styles as soon as these were introduced from Tin Pan Alley, Broadway, or Hollywood. Americans who had access to one or more of these musical conduits found themselves at the forefront of any invention in the music world. The extraordinary became a daily occurrence. Musical artists, whose appearances were usually limited to large cities, were available to network radio listeners across the nation. The most popular dance bands and orchestras could be heard regularly on the radio--for "free." Both of these innovations, the phonograph with the record changer



which allowed more than one song to be loaded on the player at a time and the radio, had the capacity simultaneously to expand the market and to introduce "fresh material" to supplant that which had been "recently " introduced. As a result, the turnover of new songs became a rapid-paced phenomenon.

Following World War I, thanks to the radio's ability to reach a massive audience, the music business boomed. New songs were continually entering the music marketplace and the listening public was constantly primed to hear the newest tunes. After World War I, songs from the years 1914-1918 were available on phonograph records and sheet music for at least twenty years, virtually an entire generation. Americans knew and sang the songs from World War I, and the OWI and the music industry expected the same popularity and longevity for songs of the Second World War. But long before the war was over, the family sing-along had been replaced by the radio and Your Hit Parade.<sup>350</sup>

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<sup>350</sup>Carl Scheele, Songs of World Wars I & II, (Washington, D.C.: Recorded Anthology of American Music, Inc., 1977): 1; Your Hit Parade (also called Hit Parade and The Lucky Strike Hit Parade), a radio program, began on April 20, 1935, and presented the top-selling songs of the week. It was the forerunner of many music ratings and lists which have become an accepted part of the music industry (including Billboard, Variety, and ASCAP's "All-Time Hit Parade" listings). The program was a reflection of the growing power of radio in making or breaking song hits.

Despite the apparent contentment of the listening public with popular music offered on the airwaves, in the juke boxes, and in music stores, the lack of a wildly popular war song was lamented in the popular press and show business tabloids. The search for one became a sacred crusade for the music business. The monetary rewards for publishers and performers of the Great American War Song were not mentioned in the press. But the royalties from best-selling songs could make performers and publishers wealthy.

In the September 1943 issue of the American Mercury, Mina Lederman wrote a lengthy analysis of the reasons behind the dearth of war songs. She recalled how past American wars "have given us songs that are touching, gay, spirited or deeply moving, and many of enduring vitality."<sup>351</sup> She reminded the reader that the biggest group of war songs such as: "Rally Round the Flag, Boys," "Dixie," "Battle Hymn of the Republic," and "When Johnny Comes Marching Home" were written during the time of the Civil War. Lederman recounted the glories of American wars in songs from the ragged armies of the Revolution making a victory tune out of "Yankee-Doodle," and "at an exalted moment in 1814, Francis Scott Key

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<sup>351</sup>Mina Lederman, "Songs for American Soldiers," American Mercury, Sept. 1943: 296.

pour[ing] out the words of the 'Star-Spangled Banner.'"352 Fighting with Spain revived the bawdy, bubbly "Hot Time in the Old Town Tonight," and in 1917 everyone sang "Over There," "Oh, How I Hate to Get up in the Morning," and "Mademoiselle from Armentieres":

World War II is already older than World War I, but to date its songs have been uniformly trivial, their mood lugubrious, even maudlin. Dance music, sweet and hot; swing-jump, scat and jive; boogie-woogie; hill-billy tunes; crooning ditties; torch songs and blues roll off our assembly lines in unprecedented quantity to reach Broadway and Port Darwin simultaneously. Many items are opulently scored, and have rhythm for which American jazz is famous. Yet among them all there isn't a single stirring song that identifies our feeling with the present day.<sup>353</sup>

Lederman charged that the songs of World War II were indistinguishable from those Americans had known for twenty years. These songs "moan of times gone by, of home and the girlfriend and they mention the war only as in 'The White Cliffs of Dover' and 'When the Lights Go on Again,' to yearn for the day it will be over, over there."<sup>354</sup> But wanting the war to be over, longing

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<sup>352</sup>ibid.

<sup>353</sup>ibid.

<sup>354</sup>ibid.

for the comforts of everyday life, returning to their homes and all the other familiar things home implied were exactly what the American servicemen said they were fighting for. They had some vague ideas about "freedom," "democracy," and "the American Way of Life," but all could understand the concept of "home." Home meant any number of things. "It was home in the broadest sense they were fighting for: their families, their girlfriends, their growing up, their childhood hopes and ambitions, their very identities."<sup>355</sup> Is it any wonder that the G.I.s preferred music that reminded them of home and comfort and security? If there was one place the soldiers could escape the war, if only for a little while, it was while listening to a favorite song. According to top ten popularity charts, servicemen definitely did not want patriotic songs or war tunes of any kind--except the humorous--to intrude on their listening time. Surveys of GIs musical preferences compiled by The Billboard in both 1944 and 1945 found that American service men preferred the same type of music as did their civilian counterparts. In September 1944, their top three favorite tune were: "I'll Be Seeing You," "Long Ago and Far Away," and "I'll Get

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<sup>355</sup>William R. Brown, "The American Girl and the Christmas Tree: World War II Soldier Poets Look at What the G.I.s Were Fighting For," Journal of American Culture, 8, no. 2, (Summer 1985), 25. See also Fussell, Wartime, 129-143.

By." In July 1945 the favorites were: "Don't Fence Me In," "Rum and Coca-Cola," "Sentimental Journey." This "GI tune report" proved one thing, according to *The Billboard*: "The reason why there hasn't been a 'great war song' is that they don't want war songs . . . foxhole or training course--they like the same tunes . . . the pattern doesn't change."<sup>356</sup> Lederman had no patience with those who made the excuse that the present struggle was "too grim, impersonal, and global for the boys to sing about."<sup>357</sup> She pointed to the songs of the Chinese with their brand new guerrilla music and the Russians with "Meadowland," the cavalry tune that became an international hit. Other examples included the French in Africa with their revision of "Madelon" and the British following bagpipers into battle. She argued that it was the Civil War, the bloodiest conflict in American history, which produced the best of our own songs. So, Lederman also wondered, why there were no American war songs that spurred the fighting men on to victory?

In answer to such questions, Army and federal government officials met in New York City's Town Hall and reviewed current

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<sup>356</sup>"G.I.'s Report on Their Sing-Songs," *The Billboard*, 30 September 1944, vol. 56, no. 39: 65; "Camp(us) Tune, Disk, Label Faves," *The Billboard*, 23 July 1945, vol. 57, no. 30: 15.

<sup>357</sup>*Ibid.*

musical practices with alarm. The Treasury Department and the United Service Organization (USO) sent songleaders from coast to coast to lift morale of the war workers and servicemen with a repertory designed to pep them up. The War Department even stepped in to bolster the effort for a proper war song. Through its Special Services Division, the Army offered a prize for a new song and each month, beginning in March 1943, distributed to the soldiers in training camps a million copies of pocket-sized Hit-Kit songbooks of patriotic and popular numbers carefully chosen by a group of writers, composers, and show business men and women known to the OWI as the "Committee of 25." These committee members included: Goodman Ace (Easy Aces), Fred Allen, Jack Benny, Edgar Bergen, Major Edward Bowes, Bob Burns, George Burns and Gracie Allen, Eddie Cantor, Freeman Gosden and Charles Correll (Amos and Andy), Bing Crosby, Nelson Eddy, Clifton Fadiman, Jean Hersholt, James Jordan and Marian Jordan (Fibber McGee and Mollie), Andre Kostelanetz, Chester H. Lauck and Morris Goff (Lum and Abner), Frank Morgan, Harold G. Peary (the Great Gildersleeve), Edward G. Robinson, Lanny Ross, Kate Smith, Kay Kyser, Bob Hope, and Red Skelton.<sup>358</sup>

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<sup>358</sup>OWI: RG 208; SG 169, WNRC.

The Hit Kit was the Army's own version of the Your Hit Parade, patterned after the already successful armed forces radio show, The Army Hour. After some grumbling about cost and profits, music publishers agreed to donate many of the songs they owned, minus their usual royalty fees. The publishers did, however, charge for orchestral arrangements of the Hit Kit tunes. The Hit Kits generally incorporated two songs from the ballads and novelty category and four from the marching song category. Songs selected for the first Hit Kit were: "This Is the Army, Mr. Jones," "Praise the Lord and Pass the Ammunition," "I've Got Sixpence," "Move It Over," "I Had the Craziest Dream," and "There Are Such Things."<sup>359</sup> The War Department was surprised at the insistence of Bing Crosby and Kate Smith that "There's a Star Spangled Banner Waving Somewhere" be included in a future Hit Kit--thinking that these radio stars were much too sophisticated for hillbilly music. But Kate Smith argued that a song selling over 1,000,000 copies without Tin Pan Alley publicity behind it must certainly be a song Americans cared about.<sup>360</sup>

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<sup>359</sup>"Army Hit Kit Gets 1st Six," Variety, 17 Feb. 1943, vol. 149, no. 10: 35.

<sup>360</sup>Michael R. Pitts, Kate Smith, a Bio-Bibliography, (Westport, CN: Greenwood Press, 1988), 10.

When composers failed to write the stirring tunes so desired by the War Department, the private sector offered a remedy: a war song contest. On 7 February 1943, a nationwide contest to obtain a patriotic song of "outstanding merit," which would "hypo [boost] public morale and aid the nation's war effort," was sponsored by the NBC radio network and the National Federation of Music Clubs. The judges included Leopold Stokowski and Fred Waring.<sup>361</sup> This competition met with little success. Mina Lederman stated, "Fighting songs are seldom written for prizes, nor can people be led to sing by appealing to their instincts for social service."<sup>362</sup>

Still, the Army wanted a rousing war song immediately. The most recent military song, "Over There," did not fit the language of this war. Before World War II, singing had been a traditional outlet for war-time exuberance. But in the Second World War people did not get together as frequently for singing. And although music publishers claimed record profits for the sale of sheet music,

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<sup>361</sup>"Army's Pop Music Project Will Debut 1st Songs Feb. 25 on M.O.T. Program," Variety 10 Feb. 1943, vol. 149, no. 10: 35; Leopold Stokowski, an American conductor of British birth, had unprecedented popularity, both for himself and the classical music he conducted; Fred Waring was a popular band leader, composer, and publisher from Pennsylvania who had a national following.

<sup>362</sup>Lederman, "Songs for Soldiers," 297.



Lederman pointed out that sheet music sales "indicate what's being sung, rather than what is merely heard." She also asked:

How often do we hear singing today as troops go marching down the streets? Parades, it's true, are not a big feature of this war. But soldiers and sailors still gather in great numbers, and with them civilians, in theaters and churches, in railroad stations and parks, in dance halls, in night and service clubs, in all places where in earlier wars the air echoed with their voices.<sup>363</sup>

Lederman claimed that inhibitions once dissolved in barbershop harmony were violently released by swing, as could be seen in the jitterbug kids dancing in the aisles of metropolitan movie theaters, the conga lines of posh night spots, or in the "steak joints" of Army towns where "the radio blares and the jukeboxes bray."<sup>364</sup> She did not find many songs worth the paper on which they were printed or the shellac on which they were pressed.

The decline of group singing of popular songs can be attributed chiefly to the advance of the machine age upon the music world. Twenty-five years before World War II the music business was a comparatively closed community consisting of the men who ran Tin Pan Alley and later the members of ASCAP who sought to

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<sup>363</sup>*Ibid.*, 297-298.

<sup>364</sup>*Ibid.*, 298.

professionalize the music business (and also to protect themselves from young, upstart composers).

The American Society of Composers, Authors, and Publishers [ASCAP] was founded in 1914 in an attempt to force restaurants, theaters, and other establishments featuring live music to pay fees for its public use. Before 1914, copyright protection covered only the purchase and mechanical reproduction of published compositions. Composers, lyricists, and publishers received no compensation from live performances of their music. After a series of legal battles eventually reaching the Supreme Court, ASCAP won its case on January 22, 1917. The ruling stated that all hotels, theaters, dance halls, cabarets, and restaurants were required to obtain a license from ASCAP--for a fee--before they could play a piece written by a composer or published by a publishing house belonging to the ASCAP organization.<sup>365</sup> In time, similar rulings were handed down in cases involving radio stations and motion picture studios.

ASCAP membership increased dramatically in the 1920s, eventually including all important publishing houses and almost all of the leading composers and lyricists of the day, and by the mid-

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<sup>365</sup>Hamm, Yesterdays: Popular Song in America, 388.

1930s some \$10,000,000 in licensing fees were paid annually. Most of the money was distributed to the membership according to a complex rating system. The recording industry was already obliged to pay fees to composers and publishers under the "mechanical reproduction" clause of the copyright law of 1909, which had fixed a fee of three cents per disc or cylinder to be paid to the copyright owner.<sup>366</sup>

The overall effect of these developments in the music business was that each of the new media--the phonograph record, the radio, and the sound movie--obtained its music from ASCAP composers and publishers, whose chief concern was with the type of music already being produced, rather than with new styles of music perhaps more appropriate to the new technology. The ASCAP members did not want to trifle with success; they knew what sold and how to write it. The songs performed on radio and in the movies were written in a style born in vaudeville and other forms of musical theater in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries.<sup>367</sup> The style of Tin Pan Alley remained constant, even in the face of these astounding technological changes. There were

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<sup>366</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>367</sup>*Ibid.*, 389.

two reasons for this constancy. One was political (meaning the control of power and leadership in the music business): ASCAP membership was the exclusive property of the men of Tin Pan Alley. The other reason was musical: the style was not that old.

The dominant reason for the persistence of a single musical style in popular songs of the Tin Pan Alley era is simply that this musical style was vibrant, successful, somewhat flexible, and relatively new in the history of popular song forms. Changes in musical style, in popular songs as in other forms of music, happen when the dominant style has been in use for a considerable period of time and composers think that it is beginning to be exhausted, when audiences get bored, and when a style has lost its "cutting edge," in the words of Virgil Thomson, noted American composer and music critic.<sup>368</sup> The first third of the twentieth century saw a large number of extremely talented songwriters exploiting a song style that was not yet dated and that could still be modified so that each of the composers was able to craft a distinctive musical personality. Thus, the first half of the twentieth century experienced a conflict between two cycles--a musical one, still in its strong formative stages, and an emerging technological one that

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<sup>368</sup>Virgil Thomson, The Art of Judging Music, (New York: A.A. Knopf, 1948), 117.

made possible, at least in theory, some radically new concepts in song. In this instance, musical impulses proved to be stronger than technology.

The Tin Pan Alley song, with almost no exceptions, was in the verse-chorus form; the verse sketched a dramatic situation or an emotional vignette, and the chorus followed as a "set" piece. The chorus was a more lyrical section, usually elaborating on the situation outlined by the verse.<sup>369</sup> The verse-chorus form of Tin Pan Alley songs functioned in much the same way as the recitative-aria pattern in opera. A single verse became standard by the 1920s, and even this was often omitted in non-stage performances. Within a decade, Tin Pan Alley composers began treating the verse as an optional part of a song. Although most songs of the 1930s and 1940s continued to be written in verse-chorus form, the verses were seldom performed or recorded, appearing only on the published sheet music. The chorus of Tin Pan Alley songs was almost always arranged in four sections of equal length. The chorus was usually thirty-two measures in length, making each of the four sections eight measures long. The only exceptions came from a doubling of chorus measures in songs of lively tempos (to sixty-four measures)

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<sup>369</sup>Hamm, Yesterdays: Popular Song in America, 359.

or from extensions of the last phrase. The four sections are usually in AABA or ABAC patterns, with occasional variations such as AABC and ABCA.<sup>370</sup> Thus the talent and versatility of Tin Pan Alley composers and lyricists was repeatedly demonstrated by what could be accomplished within a strictly determined formal structure. Of course, the cleverness of Tin Pan Alley composers could also be seen as formulaic writing, which would eventually cause the name--Tin Pan Alley--to become synonymous with mass produced, "canned" music.

The 1920s and 1930s were an era of specialization in popular song. There were composers, lyricists, performers, and publishers; it was rare for a person to be involved in more than one of these areas. This period saw the rise of the lyricist to a place of importance equivalent to composers. At the turn of the century, the average price paid a writer for a song lyric had been five dollars, with no further claim on a song's earnings. But as the popular music business moved into a period of unequalled prosperity, there was greater appreciation for the importance of a good lyric to the success of the song. With the formation of ASCAP, lyricists were regarded as the equal of composers and

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<sup>370</sup>*ibid.*, 361.

shared both publishers' royalties and the annual ASCAP fund from licensing fees.<sup>371</sup>

Initially, the verses the lyricists produced dealt with a wide range of situations and emotions. As America moved into the 1920s and 1930s, the expressive range of popular song narrowed. Texts began dealing almost exclusively with personal emotions, almost never with outside events. An increasingly large percentage of most popular songs was concerned with various aspects of romantic love. A glance at the titles on any representative list of the most popular songs of the period between 1915 and 1935, such as publisher Chappell & Company, Incorporated's list of major hits songs beginning in 1892, is enough to verify this generalization. Observers of trends in popular music were quite aware of this shift. The sentimental ballads before 1920 were often about babies, separation, and death: "After the Ball," by Charles K Harris (Long years have passed child/I've never wed/True to my lost love/Though she is dead), and "In the Baggage Coach Ahead," by Gussie L. Davis (Never a word said the man with the child/As he fondled it close to his breast/"Where is the mother go take it to her," this a lady then softly said/"I wish I could," was the man's sad reply/"But

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<sup>371</sup>Ibid., 376.

she's dead in the coach ahead.")<sup>372</sup> The theme of the sentimental songs two generations later was "the impotence of the male. . . . They celebrated sadly the failure of the man to keep his woman."<sup>373</sup>

And a songwriter of the period suggested that the preoccupation with personal love was a mirror of the times:

The Twenties sang of carefree nights and the frenetic days that rushed headlong into the nightmare and fantasy of the Thirties. Both had their reality, both voiced it. This was a score of years in which love grew from an idle and pleasant pastime into a vital avocation--romance.<sup>374</sup>

It is nearly impossible to find popular songs from the 1920s and 1930s that connect or comment in any way with the great social and political issues of those years. Popular music generated by Tin Pan Alley did not mention the acute economic and social situation of African-Americans; the struggle of working class citizens to unionize and their exploitation by owners and managers; the

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<sup>372</sup>Charles K. Harris, "After the Ball," (New York: Charles K. Harris, 1892); Gussie L. Davis, ("In the Baggage Coach Ahead," (New York: Howley, Haviland & Co., 1896).

<sup>373</sup>Gilbert Vivian Seldes, The 7 Lively Arts, (New York: Sagamore Press, 1957), 58.

<sup>374</sup>Richard Rodgers, Introduction, 100 Best Songs of the 20's and 30's, (New York: Harmony Books, 1973), xiv.



worsening situation of ethnic minorities, most notably the Jews, in Central and Eastern Europe, or the rise to power of totalitarian rule in many of these countries. These topics were left to "folk" singers, composers affiliated with the American communist party, union organizers, and African-American blues singers. A few popular songs dealing with the Great Depression such as, "Brother, Can You Spare a Dime?" (Jay Gorney and E.Y. "Yip" Harburg, 1932) and "Ten Cents a Dance," (Lorenz Hart and Richard Rodgers, 1930) stand alone in their subject matter: poverty. Other songs written with the Depression as a background were completely unresponsive to the plight of a large number of Americans. Instead these songs included cheerful, bouncy numbers like: "Beyond the Blue Horizon," (Franke Harling, Leo Robin, and Richard Whiting, 1930), "Get Happy," (Harold Arlen and Ted Koehler, 1930), "On the Sunny Side of the Street," (Dorothy Fields and Jimmy McHugh, 1930), "Life is Just a Bowl of Cherries," (Lew Brown and Ray Henderson, 1931), "Smile, Darn Ya, Smile," (Jack Meskill, Charles O'Flynn, and Max Reich, 1931), "Let's Have Another Cup of Coffee," (Irving Berlin, 1932), "Let's Put Out the Lights and Go to Sleep," (Herman Hupfield, 1932), "We're in the Money," (Al Dubin and Harry Warren, 1933), and "Who's Afraid of the Big Bad Wolf?," (Frank Churchill and Ann Ronell,

1933).<sup>375</sup> These songs invited listeners to "leave your worries on the doorstep," "forget your troubles come on get happy," or faced with "no more money in the bank" just "put out the lights and go to sleep." Is it any wonder, then, that the United States produced so few war songs during World War II? Outright war-theme songs such as "Praise the Lord and Pass the Ammunition" (Frank Loesser, 1942), "We Did It Before and We Can Do It Again" (Cliff Friend and Charles Tobias, 1941), and "Comin' in on a Wing and a Prayer" (Jimmy McHugh and Harold Adamson, 1943) made up a small percentage of the songs written during the war years. In 1942, American's first full year in the war, seventeen percent of all popular songs reaching the top ten charts were war songs. During the four years of World War II, twenty-seven war songs reached the top ten charts, but most lasted only a few weeks.<sup>376</sup> They did not have staying power. War songs were not what Tin Pan Alley specialized in, and as a result the view of the world offered to the American listening public was that of a small group of songwriters

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<sup>375</sup>"U.S. Popular Music Collection, 1920-1940," Fine Arts (Music) Reading Room, Music and Recorded Sound Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. (hereinafter cited as "U.S. Popular Music Collection, 1920-1940, Library of Congress.).

<sup>376</sup>Ben Arnold, Music and War: A Research and Information Guide, (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1980), 187.

in New York City and a burgeoning group of transplanted ASCAP composers in Hollywood.

Tin Pan Alley's stance on the content and style of American popular song was a deliberate one. These songwriters were tied directly to the most powerful elements of the Broadway musical stage and the Hollywood film musical. The "Moguls" who ran Hollywood and Broadway were mostly Jewish-Americans (Samuel Goldwyn, Louis B. Mayer, William Fox, the Warner Brothers, the Selznicks, Marcus Lowe, Nicholas and Joseph Schenck), described by Irving Howe in World of Our Fathers as, "Often vulgar, crude, and overbearing . . . fully attuned to the needs of their business . . . with a profound instinct for the common denominator of taste."<sup>377</sup>

These men left a deep imprint on American culture; they knew when to appeal to sentiment, "which twirl of fantasy, which touch of violence, which innuendo of sexuality" to use to capture American audiences--natives and immigrants alike.<sup>378</sup> The entertainment moguls believed that these media were best used to entertain

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<sup>377</sup>Irving Howe, World of Our Fathers: The Journey of the East European Jews to America and the Life They Found and Made, revised edition, (New York: Schoken Books, 1989), 165.

<sup>378</sup>*Ibid.*

people, to take their minds away from personal and national problems--not to remind them of such things.

American popular song moved toward urbanization, much as the United States itself did, beginning in the late nineteenth century. This transference of popular song from its rural roots was effectively completed in the 1910s and 1920s. By the 1930s and 1940s the field was monopolized by composers and lyricists born and trained in New York, who wrote songs for publishers based in New York City. "The style of the music and of the lyrics had become a New York style, [and] general attitudes as to what a song should be and where it should fit into American culture were also shaped by [the] taste of New York."<sup>379</sup> There was little effective cultural input from the rest of America into New York in the time leading up to World War II. Tin Pan Alley songs reflected American culture in the first half of the twentieth century because the rest of the country was willing to accept a uniquely urban, New York view as representing all of America. Hollywood music was a West Coast extension of New York. The songs of Kern, Gershwin, Porter, and their contemporaries were cosmopolitan, sophisticated, and

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<sup>379</sup>Hamm, Yesterdays: Popular Song in America, 378.

fashionable, and they were aimed at people who could be described by one or more of these adjectives--or people who hoped to be.<sup>380</sup>

The result of all this was a product accepted all over America. Tin Pan Alley songs were written and produced for white, literate, urban, middle-and upper-class Americans. They remained practically unknown to large segments of Americans, especially in the rural areas, until the 1920s and 1930s. The new technology that established commercial radio along with wide dissemination of the phonograph record brought popular music within reach of the majority of Americans.

Just as the popular music of the first thirty years of the twentieth century was written for a limited audience, the music industry's writers, composers, and publishers thought of themselves as an exclusive group. ASCAP was a closed society with membership restricted to those who had a proven track record of compositions and successes. Prior to ASCAP the music business was a hit-or-miss proposition with a wide open market. In the years between the wars, the music business expanded to the dimensions of a large-scale industry, thanks to the radio, the phonograph, the jukebox, and the sound film.

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<sup>380</sup>ibid.

Mass distribution of music brought about by technological innovations was widely praised, though there was another side to the musical revolution. The American public had little understanding of the degree to which every musically productive source was controlled. Broadcasting and recording companies even influenced the repertoires of the symphony orchestras whose deficits they helped to defray. For nearly twenty years before the war, broadcast companies, together with movie corporations, shaped the range of popular music's output.<sup>381</sup> According to Mina Lederman, as a result of this control of the music business by the broadcasters, some of the dubious effects incidental to mass merchandising finally came to light in the years preceding World War II, "effects which neither the customers--the vast and generally inert public--nor the music industry itself has yet learned to counteract."<sup>382</sup> For Lederman, the most flagrant violation of public trust by the music business was its failure to produce a good militant war song.

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<sup>381</sup>"What Makes the Hit Parade?" Variety, 6 Jan. 1943, vol. 149, no. 4: 186; "Who Selects the Air Music?" The Billboard, 17 Feb. 1945, vol. 57, no. 7: 14, 16.

<sup>382</sup>Mina Lederman, "Songs for Soldiers," 300.

Producing a good war song was not the most difficult task composers faced; getting it before the public offered a real challenge. The pattern of life and promotion for a popular song hit had changed radically from the days of World War I. Before 1917, a song would go from the stage directly to the people listening in the theater and from there it would spread across the country through sheet music sales. It lived until people stopped singing it. The music business was still fluid; its outlets were sensitive to the changing mood of the time. Spontaneous hits were possible and frequent.<sup>383</sup> During World War II thousands of songs were written and recorded, but only a small percentage were promoted by the publishers. If a song was not given time on the radio or played by dance bands, it had little chance of survival. In uncertain times publishers preferred to stay with with known composers and successful formulas.

Lederman determined that eighteen months after Pearl Harbor the popular music industry was still solidly embedded in its pre-war pattern, "Composers, writers, publishers, arrangers, band leaders, networks and jukeboxes give us for nightly consumption 'Moonlight,' 'That Old Black Magic,' and 'Taking a Chance on

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<sup>383</sup>Carl H. Scheele, Songs of World Wars I & II, (Washington, D.C.: Recorded Anthology of American Music, Inc., 1977), 1

Love."<sup>384</sup> She was particularly incensed that a ten-year-old number, "As Time Goes By," was revived and promoted to the number one place on Your Hit Parade.

Another reason for the lack of a war song was that radio, as a mass purveyor of musical goods, had to keep the songs moving at a fast pace. It was, in effect, a killer of good songs because the turnover of popular songs was so rapid that a likely candidate for the top spot lasted a relatively short time on the popularity charts. A pre-radio "smash" hit usually lasted from one-and-a-half to two years, sometimes longer. After the introduction of the radio into American homes, rather than a tune being spread gradually across the country, millions heard a popular song simultaneously, and generally it was "played to death within three months or less."<sup>385</sup> This rapid turnover also had a positive effect: songs that were topical or were part of a fad mercifully left the airwaves almost as rapidly as they came.

Another obstacle in the path of a hit war song was the fact that the radio, record, and jukebox enforced the habit of passive listening. The commercial message was the life blood of the radio

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<sup>384</sup>Lederman, "Songs for American Soldiers," 299.

<sup>385</sup>*Ibid.*



station, so the radio broadcasters, in choice of material and style, sought to have the listener in a receptive state. The use of recordings tended to develop listeners with an acute preference for a special type of music that usually involved passive listening. The jukebox might elicit physical response in the form of dancing, but active participation by playing or singing along was not encouraged. As Lederman pointed out:

Lawrence Tibbett, [an opera star] . . . visits Army and Navy Camps,. . . he finds the waiting boys always gathered around a radio or phonograph. In the last war, they sang loudly and lustily. Now someone does it for them, so why should they?<sup>386</sup>

In the broad repertory of war music, nostalgia has a special place. Every war produces new songs about home and sweethearts. According to Lederman, if World War II songs followed this historic pattern, nostalgia would, in time, assume larger dimensions. It usually combined with lost buddies and scenes of battle to give the public songs with tragic overtones. But "songs of deep longing, melancholy, exultation, even of simple high spirits" could not easily break into Tin Pan Alley's structure. This Is The Army, the government's own show written by Irving Berlin, was a monumental effort to shift from low musical gear to militant high gear.

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<sup>386</sup>ibid.

Designed, produced and plugged for "morale," it included a number of march tunes, including, "This Is the Army, Mr. Jones." But the big hit of the show turned out to be "I Left My Heart at the Stage Door Canteen," which is a love song of the boy-meets-girl variety.

Lederman, noting the contrast with the morale-raising aim of This Is the Army, was stumped by the success of Irving Berlin's "White Christmas," also a 1942 creation, but one designed to bring "a lump to the throat of every doughboy from here to India." She even wondered why Berlin would write such a song as "White Christmas" in wartime. In her view, this song, along with Cole Porter's "You'd Be So Nice to Come Home To," ran counter to the job that the popular music business should be about in a wartime setting.<sup>387</sup>

The popular music business, as will be shown in the following chapters, claimed to be doing its mightiest to produce "proper" war songs. But by tabulating record sales, the popularity of radio broadcasts featuring the current dance band favorites, and the requests for current hits by American in the armed services, it is apparent that Mina Lederman's complaints about popular music and the lack of a war song did not seem important to the men and women in uniform.

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<sup>387</sup>Ibid., 300.

Music publishers did not take any chances, either. The boys in the armed services wanted something that sounded just like the radio they left behind: "Hot, heavy, and with a heart-throb."<sup>388</sup> As The Billboard put Tin Pan Alley's case, why risk any changes when you have a system that "rings the bell every time?" Broadcasters claimed to be ready to take a chance on war instead of love, if only the publishers, arrangers, band leaders, and singers would cooperate.<sup>389</sup>

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<sup>388</sup>"Doughboys Like It Hot," The Billboard, 10 Oct. 1942, vol. 54, no. 41: 21.

<sup>389</sup>"Pubs Sour War Notes: Say Public, Writers, Maestri Set Up Obstacles to War Songs," The Billboard, 22 Aug. 1942, vol. 54, no. 34: 20; "War Songs Don't Sell," The Billboard, 8 Aug. 1942, vol. 54, no. 52: 22.

### CHAPTER 3

#### "FROM CANTATA TO OUTRIGHT CORN": THE CONTINUING SEARCH FOR A "PROPER" WAR SONG

From the beginning of the United States' involvement in World War II, it was apparent to the music business that the American public was not overly interested in bloodthirsty martial songs. Although the American Society of Composers, Authors, and Publishers president, Gene Buck, urged members on 8 December 1941 to "do their bit" for the crisis by writing "fighting songs,"<sup>570</sup> others in the music business doubted that the American public was inclined toward war songs. Publishers declared that the only way to find out was to put such songs into circulation. Marching melodies in manuscript form were dusted off and given to competent lyricists, and publishers waited for the fighting songs to roll in. Tin Pan Alley cited the experience of London's music business following the beginning of the war. At first the British had a flurry of fighting songs, but then the mood shifted, and they were interested mainly in popular tunes with themes of nostalgia

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<sup>570</sup>"Amusement Industry and the War Effort," The Billboard, 17 Jan. 1942, vol. 54, no. 3: 4.

anticipation of peace: "Wishing," "We'll Meet Again," and "Wish Me Luck."<sup>391</sup> In the United States, music consumption followed much the same pattern. Prior to the attack on Pearl Harbor, the best-selling sheet music roster in America for the week ending 6 December 1941, listed simple, cheerful, and romantic songs such as, "Tonight We Love," "Shepherd Serenade," "Chattanooga Choo Choo," "I Don't Want to Set the World on Fire," and "Why Don't We Do This More Often?". These same tunes were listed in Variety's "10 Best Sellers on Coin-Machines" for the same date.<sup>392</sup> This would seem to indicate a pattern similar to the British musical trend.

By mid-December 1941, U.S. music publishers started to reappraise some of the war songs which had come out of England. To maintain neutrality, they had been staying away from any British war songs. They also looked for songs to cheer the public; one publisher kept a list of what he termed as "smile" songs, including "A Smile Will Go a Long, Long Way," "Smiles," "Let a Smile

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<sup>391</sup>Ben Bodec, "Yank Music Pubs Recall England," Variety, 10 Dec. 1941, vol.145, no. 1: 1, 39.

<sup>392</sup>"10 Best Sellers on Coin Machines,"Variety, 10 Dec. 1941, vol. 145, no. 1: 38; "15 Best Sheet Music Sellers," Variety, 10 Dec. 1941, vol. 145, no. 1: 39.

Be Your Umbrella," and "Smile, Darn Ya, Smile."<sup>393</sup> The idea was that the war was going to be gruesome and Americans would need cheery diversions. Publishers also realized they could not make a living selling war songs only. People would need some variety in their choice of entertainment, and Tin Pan Alley proposed to offer its patrons an assortment of tunes.

As early as 7 January 1942, Variety reported that the English public's sentiment was definitely negative toward war or patriotic songs of the "There'll Always Be an England" type. Abel Green, editor of Variety, said, "The majority of people feel that they get enough of the war in the newspapers and they don't want it in their music."<sup>394</sup>

American publishers, however, blamed others for the failure of war songs to sell; their main targets were dance band leaders. Publishers said there was a change in the musical taste of Americans, but the band leaders were not aware of it because they were too immersed in their own egos and "swing fantasies" to give the public the type of patriotic songs it wanted. Jack Robbins of

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<sup>393</sup>"Sift English War Songs for America Now," Variety, 17 Dec. 1941, vol.145, no. 2: 2.

<sup>394</sup>Abel Green, "Selling Side of Song Plugging," Variety, 7 Jan. 1942, vol. 145, no. 5: 156.

Robbins Music Corp., stated, "Leaders are still living in a world of their own and are loathe to yield themselves to playing music of the times."<sup>395</sup> The lack of interest on the part of the band leaders had "discouraged wider acceptance and publication" of these tunes. "The average jumparoo band, they hold, feels that such tunes are corny and if they play them their followers will drift away from them."<sup>396</sup> Leo Feist, of Leo Feist, Inc., recalled with other publishers, the advantages they had enjoyed in World War I when a song's popularity did not depend on dance bands but on vaudeville singers who were closer to the "temper of the times" and were quick to respond to songs that reflected the "current thoughts and feelings of the people."<sup>397</sup> This observation indicates that even music publishers had not realized the full extent of the changes in the music business brought about by advanced technology and the rise in popularity of dance bands since World War I. He seems to think that music publishers had lost control of song promotion and longed for the days when vaudeville singers plugged the publishers'

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<sup>395</sup>"Advanced ' Dancemen Call War Songs Too Corny but the Public Buys Them," Variety, 4 Feb. 1942, vol. 145, no. 9: 1.

<sup>396</sup>*Ibid.*, 13.

<sup>397</sup>*Ibid.*

work. In his observation, Feist neglected to mention that vaudeville singers might possibly have had a financial interest in promoting a song to best-seller status. Singers's pictures usually appeared on the covers of sheet music with which the singers had (or hoped to) become identified. Often the words, "As introduced by," "As made famous by," or "As sung by" were printed on the front cover. Sheet music acted as advertising for both the song and the vaudeville singer. Publishers also offered singers a percentage of profit on sheet-music sales in payment for their songplugging services, so it would appear publishers had more control of their product when vaudeville was the primary mode that Tin Pan Alley used to sell songs. When the music industry changed from vaudeville to recorded music as the primary means of reaching the public, the emphasis changed from the actual song, to the performance. Rather than singing the songs themselves (using sheet music), people sought out particular recorded performances of a song.

By 11 March 1942, W.H. Lewis, former CBS vice president and then Federal Radio Coordinator for the Office of War Information, had had enough of what he termed "prima donna" behaviour and was chastising the music business for its petty jealousies, frequent squabbles, and noisy bickerings. He said that "unless all pull



together to smite the common enemy the desired ends cannot be achieved."<sup>398</sup>

Music publishers were not alone in their skepticism about the first flood of war melodies being turned out in early 1942. Coin machine operators (the men who serviced juke boxes and provided the recordings for them), closed their machines to most of the war tunes. "They shrug off new tunes with quick . . . bored dismissal . . . adding pointed remarks about the quality of the majority of the numbers."<sup>399</sup> The coin-machine operators thought that too many tunes had been written and that few of them would make money. One operator said that most of his machines were in barrooms and similar venues, and that he had had requests to "remove war tune discs he had inserted." Standard numbers like the "Marines' Hymn" were acceptable, but all of the music written since December 7, with the exception of "Remember Pearl Harbor," was unsatisfactory.<sup>400</sup> Very few juke box operators went against their

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<sup>398</sup>"U.S. Radio Coordinator Sets H'wood Straight on War-Aid Programs," Variety, 11 Mar. 1942, vol. 146, no. 1: 4.

<sup>399</sup>"Too Few War Tunes Good for Sales," Variety, 25 Mar. 1942, vol.146, no. 3: 3

<sup>400</sup>*Ibid.*

customers' wishes, and the war songs were removed from the machines.

In order to bolster the impression that the music business was actively doing its part for the war effort, the Music Publishers Protective Association began encouraging its members to print patriotic slogans on the title page of sheet music. "Buy U.S. Bonds and Stamps," "Let's Go U. S. A.," and "Keep 'Em Flying" were just a few of the slogans that graced sheet music in the ensuing years.<sup>401</sup> By 15 April 1942, just four months after the attack on Pearl Harbor, the Music Publishers Protective Association's title registration division announced that it had not had a new war song added to its files in weeks. Music publishers stayed away from war songs unless there was a novelty or romantic twist to them. Claiming that Americans would not take to a fighting song until the United States had rung up "a few resounding victories." As one put it, "Apparently this is one war that American people don't want to sing about until it's won and over."<sup>402</sup>

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<sup>401</sup>"Patriotic Slogans on Song Sheets Set Style Other Pubs May Follow," Variety, 1 April 1942, vol. 146, no. 4: 1.

<sup>402</sup>"Not Singing About This War," Variety, 15 April 1942, vol. 146, no. 6: 1.

There was a tremendous amount of discussion in Tin Pan Alley regarding the lack of a good war song. Composer Isham Jones, the band leader who wrote "You're in the Army Now" during World War I, thought that "America is too mad about this war to do much singing. There won't be any warblin' until we're winnin'." He continued:

You see, we never took a licking before. . . . In fact, we never have known the taste of defeat until now. We don't like it and we don't feel like singing as long as that taste is still in our mouth.<sup>403</sup>

What were people singing? Old war songs, those written during World War I, were the most popular at the military training camps in the weekly community sings. Major Harold A. Vorhees found that "K-K-K-Katie," "Goodbye Broadway, Hello France," "Tipperary," and "Yankee Doodle" were preferred to the more modern songs.<sup>404</sup>

The United States' naval victory at the Battle of Midway 4 June 1942,<sup>405</sup> and the accomplishments of the Allies in western Europe

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<sup>403</sup>"Isham Jones on Why War Songs Flop," Variety, 10 June 1942, vol. 147, no. 1: 43.

<sup>404</sup>"Give 'Em the Old Ones," Variety, 10 June 1942, vol. 147, no. 1: 43.

<sup>405</sup>James L. Stokesbury, A Short History of World War II, (New York: William Morrow and Company, 1980), 215.

and in Africa boosted music sales, proving the publishers correct in their assertion that there was nothing wrong with the industry that a few victories couldn't cure. Sheet music sales soared by forty per cent in the week following the U.S. Navy's defeat of the Japanese at Midway. The upsurge in sales was not boosted by a "hot" song. There were no new hit songs introduced at this time; the best sellers had been on the list for over a month.<sup>406</sup> The boom in sheet music sales was paralleled by the public's general outlook on the war. The OWI's "Surveys of Public Attitudes" showed an increased confidence about winning the war against Germany and Japan. When 5000 Americans were asked in August 1942, two months following the Battle of Midway, "Which of these four statements comes closest to the way you feel the war with Germany and Japan is going?" they replied:

- 1) We have practically beaten them. .... 4%
- 2) It may take time but we cannot lose. .... 63%
- 3) Unless we work harder, we will not win. .... 28%
- 4) It looks as if it is too late. .... 1%
- 5) Donotknow. .... 4%

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<sup>406</sup>Ben Bodec, "Victories Help Song Sales: Midway Boosts Sheet Music Biz," Variety, 10 June 1942, vol. 147, no. 7: 1, 44.

When this same question was asked in December 1942, the confidence level of Americans had risen even higher:

- 1) We have practically beaten them. .... 8%
- 2) It may take time, but we cannot lose. .... 72%
- 3) Unless we work harder, we will not win. .... 17%
- 4) It looks as if it is too late. .... (less than 1%)
- 5) Donotknow. .... 3%

By the following June, after a year of difficult fighting, the American public's optimism had reached new heights. The same questions were asked of 5000 people with the following results:

- 1) We have practically beaten them. .... 8%
- 2) It may take time, but we cannot lose. .... 73%
- 3) Unless we work harder, we will not win. .... 15%
- 4) It looks as if it is too late. .... 1%
- 5) Donotknow. .... 3%<sup>407</sup>

Despite the bolstered confidence of the American public, the dearth of war songs persisted. The public still preferred sentimental or romantic songs. If by chance a war song caught the public's attention, it was usually a topical or a novelty song. "The only fighting tunes that have clicked since Dec. 7, even in a

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<sup>407</sup>OWI: RG 208; Surveys of Public Attitudes, SG 118, WNRC.

moderate fashion, are 'We Did It Before and We Can Do It Again' and 'Remember Pearl Harbor', and these had their run months ago."<sup>408</sup>

Professional show business managers, once again, contended that the industry's failure to "sell" a fighting song was due more than anything else to its principle source of exploitation: radio. For a martial song to produce a real emotional impact, they pointed out, it was necessary for the listener to see the song actually performed and to be part of a crowd where proximity to others generated the reaction. In the last war, there had been a steady, slow procession of war songs because vaudeville audiences served as the chief determinant of a war song's life. But Variety concluded that in the Second World War, the crowd psychology of the First World War was missing, and this was a reason for the lack of good war songs:

It is easy to assume . . . that one or two persons sitting in their living rooms listening to the same radio aren't likely to get the same emotional lift from even a patriotic tune as would be theirs were these same two persons part of a gathering of several hundred or several thousand. As these music men see it, the spirit of the people may not have changed, but the channel for getting at this spirit is certainly

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<sup>408</sup>ibid.

different and in no small measure a handicap to the business of selling war songs.<sup>409</sup>

Immediately after its formation, the OWI urged songwriters and music publishers to pay more attention to the war tunes they were producing and to try to avoid what the OWI called "tactless" war songs. The government suggested that songs of the "Slap the Jap" and "Goodbye Mamma, I'm Off to Yokohama" variety that belittled the size and power of the enemy were "unwise." The "peace-and-ease" songs about the future like "The White Cliffs of Dover" also annoyed the OWI at a time when there was still "a war to be won and hardships to be endured."<sup>410</sup> One of the few songs that the OWI pointed to as properly serious and morale boosting was "This Is Worth Fighting For." But it did not sell.

Clearly the production of war songs had not gone as the government thought it should in 1942, and propagandists in Washington, especially William B. Lewis of OWI, were anxious to remedy the situation. He announced plans for a series of

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<sup>409</sup>Ben Bodec, "Victories Help Song Sales: However, '42 Radio Unable to Match Strength of 1917-18 Vaudeville as Song-Plugging Medium--Not the Same Crowd Psychology," Variety, 10 June 1942, vol. 147, no. 1: 44.

<sup>410</sup>"Tactless War Songs," Variety, 15 June 1942, vol. 147, no. 6: 3.

conferences between OWI officials and representatives of the music industry. Lewis wanted songwriters and publishers to concentrate on songs that would both boost morale and sell<sup>411</sup> The OWI perplexed and sometimes amused the music business. As Variety editor Abel Green noted, "Song hits are not easily picked nor are artificial selections easily put over on the public."<sup>412</sup>

A preliminary meeting was held in New York City, 15 July 1942, between popular music publishers and a representative of the OWI, Domestic Radio Bureau Coordinator Elmer Davis, who was acting for William B. Lewis. At this meeting Davis stressed that the OWI wanted more "fighting" songs and "less boy-meets-girl roseate stuff" to better prepare the public for the "glum long war" ahead.<sup>413</sup>

The music publishers agreed that a war song runaway hit like George M. Cohan's "Over There" was unexplainable and that "the wrong kind of slushy stuff unsuitable to tough times should be kept in the publisher's safe until after the war as a matter of

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<sup>411</sup>Ibid.

<sup>412</sup>Ibid.

<sup>413</sup>Abel Green, "First Steps Taken for Fighting Songs; Dreamy Stuff Doesn't Fit Long War," Variety, 22 June 1942, vol. 147, no. 7: 1, 19.



patriotism."<sup>414</sup> In short, the OWI wanted to encourage lyrics that supported the war, or, failing that, to at least check the kind of "drivel" that might handicap fighting and winning it.

The music industry leaders at this meeting were some of the most powerful men in publishing and broadcasting. They should have been able to solve the problem of a war song, but even the best informed and most powerful people in the music industry had difficulties finding a war song for the country. At this meeting were Edwin Hughes, president of the National Music Council; Harry Fox, general manager of the Music Publishers Protective Association, whose function was to guide the publishers regarding the "correct" war songs; Sigmund Romberg, who helped set "correct" guidelines for the songsmiths; Manie Sachs, recording director of Columbia Phonograph, who was liaison to the recording companies; Philip Carlin, program director of the CBS blue network, who would lead the radio networks; Lloyd Egnor, manager of Thesaurus Transcriptions, who programmed recordings with the "proper" war song material; John O'Connor, president of the Music Contact Men's Union, a "songplugging" [music advertising] agency that was an important go-between in the propagation of war songs; and Ralph

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<sup>414</sup>Ibid., 1.

Peer, the music publisher (Southern Music and Peer International, San Antonio, Texas) who was also on Nelson Rockefeller's Latin American coordinating committee. These men were to set the tone for the music industry's cooperation with the federal government's "morale planners."<sup>415</sup>

On 28 July 1942, W.B. Lewis, the Federal Radio Coordinator of the OWI's radio division, came to New York from Washington as the speaker at the Songwriters Protective Association dinner. This was part of the OWI's drive to stimulate a war idiom in American popular song. The campaign against "tactless" songs was reiterated to the songwriters, along with the prime objective of the OWI, "the need for a new high standard in the U.S. pop [songs] standard so as to best get across the cause of Democracy to America and our Allies."<sup>416</sup>

At the 28 July 1942 meeting, Sigmund Romberg, noted composer of operettas and president of the Songwriters Protective Association, stated: "The need is for songs to be sung by the

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<sup>415</sup>OWI: RG 208; Domestic Radio Bureau, New York Radio Division: SG 169, WNRC.

<sup>416</sup>"OWI's Radio Head Tells Songwriters of War Idiom Need in Pop Numbers," Variety, 29 July 1942, vol. 147, no. 8: 3.

fighters rather than at them,"<sup>417</sup> and Lewis said that a little extra effort would lead to the publication of "worthier" fighting songs which would result in getting the message across to the American public.<sup>418</sup>

Despite these congenial meetings there were grumbling voices in the music industry, many of which preferred to remain anonymous. One such publisher wrote Variety to complain that not only were "tactless" war songs a problem, but there were also shortcomings in the catalog of war songs. The most notable seemed to be the fact that, "the bulk of our published war songs are not really war songs at all, but the old boy-girl songs re-staged in a war setting, or rehashed with a bit of military terminology."<sup>419</sup> He also noted that some of the most competent lyricists and composers were ignored by the music business when they offered a song that did not present the war in boy-girl terms.

One songwriter, Bernie Grossman, complained that he and others faced many obstacles when they attempted to sell war songs. The

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<sup>417</sup>ibid.

<sup>418</sup>ibid.

<sup>419</sup>"'War' Song, Really 'Boy-Girl' Songs!" Variety, 22 July 1942, vol 147, no. 8: 7.

first was finding a title that would garner attention so that artists would record or perform a song. The second hurdle was finding a music publisher. The publishers, already wary of war songs, wanted tunes that would sell. Grossman added that the "the bandleader, the broadcaster and recording artist . . . will tell you (as they have told me), 'We don't want any war songs, there is enough war talk on the air by commentators and the newspapers are chuckful of it. We are not interested.'"<sup>420</sup> The American people did not need or want a war song to motivate them and war songs simply did not make money.

There was another problem. American servicemen were not particularly interested in war songs. Entertainer George Price said that in traveling to the various military camps, he had discovered "the soldiers don't want any war or patriotic songs. They want old favorites and gang songs . . . they don't want to be reminded of the war in song."<sup>421</sup> Gracie Fields, an English comedienne who had just returned from a ten-week tour of the battle front in Europe, explained why war songs failed to catch the attention of the

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<sup>420</sup>"Tells Songwriters of War Need," Variety, 29 July 1942, vol. 147, no. 8: 35.

<sup>421</sup>*Ibid.*

soldiers: there were "too many tanks and planes and trucks . . . Soldiers are on the move . . . never do enough of them stay in one place long enough for a tune to sweep [through] divisions and armies."<sup>422</sup> Fields told The Milwaukee Journal that the soldiers knew as many of the new popular songs as any civilian; they learned them by radio. On the other hand, she said that the soldiers requested old songs and always asked for "Ave Maria" or "The Lord's Prayer." But the absolute favorite of the men wherever she appeared was a little ditty about army life:

Don't be angry with me, sergeant,  
 Don't say what you're going to say--  
 Don't call me what you called me yesterday.  
 Don't say rude things about my parents.  
 Remember, they're the only ones I've known;  
 And some day, tho you are a sergeant,  
 You might have some parents of your own.<sup>423</sup>

An OWI survey of army camps throughout the United States found that soldiers wanted to hear dance music above all else, but a rousing patriotic number on the order of "Over There," though not necessary to win the war, would certainly be welcomed. In the meantime, American troops were singing "Jingle, Jangle, Jingle"

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<sup>422</sup>Margaret S. Wells, "Music in the News," The Billboard, 20 Nov. 1943, vol. 55, no. 47: 67.

<sup>423</sup>*Ibid.*

while the British were belting out "The Beer Barrel Polka"--neither of which had much war flavor to them.<sup>424</sup>

In answer to the accusation that music publishers favored songs with a boy-girl sentiment and played down those with a martial spirit, Jack Robbins, music publisher, listed a number of patriotic songs his firm had issued. Further, Robbins proposed to publish any ten songs selected by the OWI or by a committee of the top ten dance band leaders and outstanding vocalists such as Kate Smith, Dinah Shore, Bing Crosby, Rudy Vallee or Barry Wood, and promised to donate his company's profits to the USO. Robbins was quick to point out that the American public might surprise the music business by discriminating between patriotic songs and "rah-rah" war songs. By this Robbins meant patriotic songs in the same vein as "America," "Battle Hymn of the Republic," and "God Bless America," and not simple-minded, cheerful tunes of bravado such as "Cranky Old Yank in a Clanky Old Tank," "Nimitz and Halsey and Me!" "Chin Up! Cheerio! Carry On!" "Every State Has Answered the Call," "Forward, Forces of the Red, White, and Blue," "Gee, Isn't It Great to Be an American!" "Hey, Tojo! Count Yo' Men!" "I'm a Son of a Son of a

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<sup>424</sup>OWI: RG 208; Records of the Domestic Radio Bureau: SG 169; "No Hit War Song Yet," The Billboard, 17 Oct. 1942, vol. 54, no. 41: 62.

Yankee Doodle," "Let's Go! U.S.A." "Shout Wherever You May Be--I Am an American," "Yankee Doodle Ain't Doodlin' Now," "You'll Be Sorree!" or "Thank Your Lucky Stars and Stripes."<sup>425</sup> The following song titles, from the Metro-Robbins syndicate of music publishers (Feist, Miller, and Robbins companies), were only a few of the hundreds of war-themed songs which failed to appear on Your Hit Parade: "Ballad for Americans" (John Latouche and Earl Robinson); "Uncle Sam Gets Around" (Leo Robin and Ralph Rainger); "I Hear America Singing" (Mitchell Parish and Peter DeRose); "The Two Americas" (Mary Carolyn Davies and Dominico Savino); "Uncle Sam Stands Up" (Ben Hecht and Ferde Grofe); "The American's Creed" (William Tyler Page-Hugo Frey); "My Own America" (Allie Wrobel); "Me and My Uncle Sam" (Will A. Dillon); "Franklin D. Roosevelt March" (Irving Caesar and William H. Woodin); and "March for Americans" (Ferde Grofe).<sup>426</sup> Most of these songs were never recorded, or if they were, they had a limited release. Minor artists and studio bands were usually called on to perform. Not one of these songs

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<sup>425</sup>"U.S. Popular Music Collection, 1941-1945," Library of Congress.

<sup>426</sup>"Jack Robbins Challenges 'Boy-Girl' War Song Charges at SPA; Offers to Publish Any 10 Picked by OWI," Variety, 19 July 1942, vol. 147, no. 11: 37.

was recorded by a well-known artist. That fact alone meant these tunes would be confined to low sales figures. The best of these tunes sold only a few thousand copies of sheet music.

Music publishers continued to blame the band leaders for not exposing the public to war songs. Jack Robbins contended that some band leaders were only interested in their own publishing houses and "seemed to think the war has no connection with their lives."<sup>427</sup> People were interested in hearing inspiring patriotic tunes, he thought, but the bands would not play them. Robbins's solution was to put pressure on band leaders, by way of a committee of publishers, talent agency executives, and star performers empowered to force performances of worthy war songs. In Robbins's words, "Only when you force selfish people to cooperate will you get any results."<sup>428</sup> Robbins, had a vested interest in performance of "worthy war songs," as his publishing company had a large stock of patriotic tunes but very few current popular hits. Bandleaders used their own publishing houses to

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<sup>427</sup>"Pubs' Sour War Notes," The Billboard, 22 Aug. 1942, vol. 54, no. 34: 20.

<sup>428</sup>*ibid.*



supplement their incomes, so it was natural they would play tunes they owned or had recorded.

The United States' military circumstances up to this point had been discouraging. The war started with a series of defeats and stalemates. This led government officials to worry that the people might become demoralized or impatient for peace. as Time magazine observed, during the first six months after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, the United States had not "taken a single inch of enemy territory, not yet beaten the enemy in a major battle of land, not yet opened an offensive campaign."<sup>429</sup> The government was especially concerned that a significant portion of Americans would be anxious for a compromise settlement with Germany. A mid-1942 survey indicated that "three out of every ten Americans would view favorably a negotiated peace with the German army leaders."<sup>430</sup> With nearly a third of the population willing to settle for a compromise peace, the government's demands and commitments to meet the stated war aims seemed threatened. The government went on the offensive. And so did the OWI.

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<sup>429</sup>"If the War Ended Today," Time 20 July 1942.

<sup>430</sup>Ibid.

By 25 August 1942, it was clear to the OWI that every branch of the entertainment business would have to be involved in a comprehensive government plan "to aid in and encourage the writing of rousing war songs." W.B. Lewis said it was important to "sell Federal officials the importance of not neglecting" this major psychological need of the war. Lewis' theory was that everyone who had an interest in songs, from the writers and composers to the sales clerk in the music store, should participate in whipping up public enthusiasm, since, in Lewis's variation of General Bell's adage, "a nation that sings can never be beaten."<sup>431</sup> The nation was singing, all right, it just was not singing "proper" war songs.

Following Lewis' initial talk to the songwriters in July 1942, a secret trade [music business] committee, designated by Lewis and described as "a group of disinterested publishers," began sifting through hundreds of compositions looking for the "right kind" of war songs. Those songs deemed worthy by the Lewis committee were returned to the authors with a list of publishers who insisted they were interested in good war songs.<sup>432</sup>

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<sup>431</sup>"To Encourage Fighting Tunes," Variety, 26 Aug. 1942, vol. 147, no. 12: 3.

<sup>432</sup>*ibid.*, 44.

Some music publishers were angered by the OWI's tendency to meet on the war song problem, not with them but with composers. One complained, "The government has made no requests to us, but has wasted time talking to the songwriters . . . It's up to us to interpret public tastes, and if the government had only come to me I would have set it straight." The publisher continued, "I know for a fact that the public doesn't want fighting songs . . . you can't write songs to order." He warned readers that "Somebody Else Is Taking My Place" was voted most popular song among the soldiers and "This Is Worth Fighting For," a good war song, was not selling. "Until such time as the Government is ready to foot the bill I'm not going to lose money printing fighting songs. If you want to quote me, say that I am all for fighting songs, tho!"<sup>433</sup> This publisher's attitude was typical. They were first and foremost in business to make money, and the government was not going to reimburse the publishers for their losses. If war songs flopped, the publishers were out the expense of printing, promotion, and paying fees or royalties to the songwriters. But these men did not want to appear greedy or uncooperative and so continued to insist they were eager to help find the Great American War Song. Walter Douglas of the

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<sup>433</sup>"Pubs' Sour War Notes," The Billboard, 22 Aug. 1942, vol. 54, no. 34: 20, 59.

Music Publishers' Protective Association, said, "We can't write the songs. All we can do is publish them, if we think they're worth publishing. The Office of War Information has spoken to the songwriters and the rest is up to them."<sup>434</sup> Some of the publishers might have feared losing control of the music industry to the government. After all, music publishers were the most powerful part of the industry. Without their approval, no song was published. They were also in a battle with record producers to obtain the first rights to songs. Any move that threatened music publishers, such as consulting with composers and performing artists without the publishers, too, concerned them. Government interference in the established method of song production was not popular on 42nd Street.

Joe Davis, head of a small publishing firm, believed that the government was wrong--that there were many good war songs available, but band leaders simply would not play them in the belief that people would not like them. Davis also echoed Jack Robbins's argument that many band leaders were more concerned with the success of their own publishing ventures than promoting war songs. Bandsmen, writers, and even some publishers thought that if the

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<sup>434</sup>ibid.

music industry put as much energy behind good songs as it did bad ones, the good songs would inevitably catch on and do the desired morale-building job the OWI and others were so concerned about. These people believed that neither songwriters nor band leaders were going to co-operate until the publishers (who supported the writers and supplied the leaders) indicated that they were ready to pitch in.<sup>435</sup>

One music publishing firm that did turn out a remarkable number of war songs--almost on an assembly line basis--was Fred Waring's company, Words & Music, Inc. It published songs for every branch of the armed services, and most of these were then recorded by Decca. Some of these war songs included: "Look Out Below (Song of the Paratroopers)," "Roll, Tanks, Roll," "Song for the Unsung: The Men of the Merchant Marine," "Cadets of the Army Air Corps," "Sky Anchors (Naval Aviation Song)," "Song of the M.P's," "High Away (With the Air Transport Command)," "Man to Man (Infantry Song)," "The Flying Marines," "A Toast to the Army Air Corps," and "Army Hymn."<sup>436</sup> "Fire Up! (A Marching Song of the Chemical Warfare

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<sup>435</sup>ibid.

<sup>436</sup>OWI: RG 208; Records of the Domestic Radio Bureau; Fred Waring papers: SG 169, WNRC.

Service)," by Meredith Willson, is typical of the march-type songs published by Words & Music, Inc and recorded by Fred Waring's Pennsylvanians:

FIRE UP! Carry on to victory  
 And on to freedom ever more;  
 We're going to show our right where Yankees fight,  
 For the flag, for the home, and for the Corps.  
 So, FIRE UP! Carry on to victory  
 And on beyond the battles' roar  
 We're going to sign our name in smoke and flame  
 For the flag, for the home, and for the Corps.  
 Oh, the "Difficult" we do immediately,  
 The impossible may take a little longer  
 Through ev'ry test comes the C.W.S.  
 TRUER, BRAVER, STRONGER!  
 It's hip, hip hooray!  
 For the CHEMICAL WARFARE SERVICE ev'rywhere,  
 On the sea, in the field and in the air.  
 It's FIRE UP! Carry on to victory  
 And on beyond the battles' roar,  
 We're going to sign our name in smoke and flame  
 For the FLAG, for the HOME, and for the CORPS.<sup>437</sup>

It seemed as if no area of military service was to be overlooked by Fred Waring and his stable of writers. Even the military police were given a musical tribute, also in march tempo with a forgettable tune, in "Song of the M.P's":

When artillery is blasting and equipment's moving  
 up,  
 And a traffic jam would do a lot of harm,

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<sup>437</sup>Meredith Willson, "FIRE UP! A Marching Song of the Chemical Warfare Service," (New York: Words & Music, Inc., 1943).

Who is working under fire  
 And who never seems to tire?  
 He's the man with the band around his arm  
 He's an M.P., M.P., M.P., M.P.,  
 That's me.  
 Oh, show me my post, give me my gun  
 Let me fight the war or let me guard the peace  
 Send me any old place under the sun  
 With the men of the military police.<sup>438</sup>

The thinking behind many of these "service" songs--that dealt with war-related jobs considered less than glamorous or not as worthy of musical tribute as pilots or combat infantrymen, was that all jobs were essential to the war effort and each area of service deserved to be recognized as worthy of praise. One of the most popular ways to single out a group for praise was by commissioning a song in its honor. For example, Fred Hamlin of the Civil Aeronautics Authority asked Fred Waring to write a song for transport pilots. Hamlin thought transport pilots had received "little credit for the work they are doing," and they also faced "just as much danger as the combat pilot." A song dedicated

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<sup>438</sup>Fred Waring and Jack Dolph, "Song of the M.P.'s," (New York: Words & Music, Inc., 1943).

to them would be a "deserved tribute and a morale-bulider" for the transport pilots.<sup>439</sup>

Just when Tin Pan Alley and the OWI despaired of finding a great war song, Frank Loesser's "Praise the Lord and Pass the Ammunition" appeared on the best-seller charts. Variety thought the song might become the "Over There" of World War II because it was "different from the other war tunes in that it is not a ballad. It's out-and-out war propaganda, yet it has a lilt and a touch of genius which may give it immortality"<sup>440</sup> The song caught on so rapidly that the publisher, Famous Music, with the approval of the OWI, asked radio networks to air it once every four hours in order to prolong the normal six-to-eight week life span of a typical popular tune. The networks, however, insisted that neither the publisher nor the government could tell them how to run their business. Many radio stations played "Praise the Lord" as often as they wished. After begging for a war song, the OWI was afraid that "Praise the Lord and

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<sup>439</sup>OWI: RG 208, letter from Charles Hamlin to Barnum and Van Nostrand, 19 April 1943, Fred Waring Papers: SG 169, WNRC.

<sup>440</sup>"Music Goes to War, Variety 37th Anniversary Issue, 6 January 1943, vol. 149, no. 4: 189.



Pass the Ammunition" would not last. And it did not. The American people bought enough records and sheet music and networks broadcast the tune so many times that it quickly catapulted onto Your Hit Parade. It sold over a million records for Kay Kyser and a total of two million records by various artists. It was the tenth-ranked song of 1942's top ten tunes.<sup>441</sup> During that same week in November 1942, other songs on the best-seller list included such non-war-themed songs as: "White Christmas," "I Got a Gal in Kalamazoo," "Strip Polka," and "Mr. Five By Five." These songs and hundreds of others with similar titles caused the Office of War Information to reinforce its efforts to get war songs before the public.

Meeting in Columbia, Missouri, 10 November 1942, the Association for Education by Radio heard Charles A. Seipmann of the OWI (by way of the British Broadcasting Corporation and Harvard) stress that what Americans needed was more of the "Yankee Doodle spirit of 1776." Seipmann continued, "Propaganda can win the war, and must. Armed victory alone cannot . . . music is

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<sup>441</sup>"Praise the Lord's' Great Press," Variety, 4 Nov. 1942, vol. 148, no. 9: 41, 47; Don Tyler, Hit Parade: An Encyclopedia of the Top Songs of the Jazz, Depression, Swing, and Sing Eras, (New York: William Morrow, 1985), 109.

. . . our strong morale builder." He acknowledged that entertainment programs were valuable "morale maintainers" that helped Americans relax from the strains of war, but he stated that "until 'Praise the Lord and Pass the Ammunition' we have had no songs with which to march away to war."<sup>442</sup> Hoping that Loesser's song would be the Great American War Song, the U.S. Treasury Department commandeered the tune and rewrote the words to help sell war bonds. The lyrics became "Raise the cash to buy the ammunition," but even this did not satisfy the OWI.<sup>443</sup> The U.S. Treasury Department and the OWI wanted Tin Pan Alley to do more to raise war bond sales. Every one of the war loan drives was oversubscribed. But most of the money came from banks, corporations, and other businesses. Despite all the gimmicks the government tried: Hollywood movie stars selling bonds, offering items such as Betty Grables stockings or Jack Benny's violin to the highest bidder, the individual bond quotas were never met. A concerned government looked for every means possible to boost individual bond sales, not only to curb inflation by siphoning excess

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<sup>442</sup>John Powell Anderson, "Educators Mull Radio's Part in Peace," Variety, 11 Nov. 1942, vol. 148, no. 10: 30.

<sup>443</sup>"Raise the Cash to Buy the Ammunition," Variety, 25 Nov. 1942, vol. 148, no. 12: 1.

cash, but also to insure that American's hearts and minds would stay close to the war effort and their pocketbooks.

The Music Publishers Protective Association took the OWI's suggestions for song topics that would promote morale and boost pride and passed them along to association members. Paul Fussell says that one way of generating morale, or "Pride in Outfit," was to write songs "for the troops . . . especially songs that glorify such hopelessly unromantic branches of the service as the infantry and the construction battalions, or Seabees."<sup>444</sup> With this concept in mind of rewarding or giving credit to lowly occupations, mundane duties, or commodity rationing, during the first week in December 1942, the OWI recommended that songs backing the government's current campaign on transportation conservation could be helpful. The OWI letter even suggested a title, "Wrap It Up and I'll Take It Home." This song's name was meant to suggest to Americans that they could do their part to conserve gasoline, tires, and automobiles by taking their purchases home with them instead of expecting the stores and shops to deliver to private homes as had been the custom in many places before the war began. The OWI's communication concluded with these thoughts:

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<sup>444</sup>Fussell, Wartime, 154-155.

Some other important themes right now are the theme of the war worker (including the woman war worker); the fundamental rationing theme, which is a theme of sacrifice; the theme of conservation. This last means taking care of what we have, making the things last, making things do. It is a necessary theme, because we are putting all our industry into the weapons our fighting men must have to win this war. Cheerful treatment of the theme of doing without, of getting along with what we have, helps keep us rolling toward victory.<sup>445</sup>

Music publishers commented that the writer of the OWI letter obviously was unaware that many songs already published dealt with conservation, rationing, war workers, and the sacrifices that all Americans were being called on to make. Some of the most obvious choices were: "I Can Do Without Sugar, But I Can't Do Without You," "American Women for Defense," "Buy a Bond Today," "Dig Down Deep," (a song on behalf of the U.S. Treasury's War Bonds and Stamps campaign), "Back the Red, White and Blue with Gold," "Knit One, Purl Two," "Making Hay for the U.S.A.," "Seeds for Victory and Peace," "There Won't Be a Shortage of Love," "There'll Never Be a Black Out in My Heart for You," "There's No Ceiling on Love," and a song that spoke of American women's new roles working outside

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<sup>445</sup>OWI: RG 208; Records of the Domestic Radio Bureau; National Wartime Committee: SG 169, WNRC.

the home: "Rosie the Riveter."<sup>446</sup> The latter, with its lively meter and bouncy tune, was intended to boost the morale and pay tribute to women working in defense industries, although the lyrics insisted that "Rosie" was still a "little frail" who was doing a man's job in order to "protect" her boyfriend. The lyric "There's something true about/Red, white and blue about/Rosie the Riveter," referred either to her devotion to the nation or her boyfriend or both. This song reinforced two important war time messages: hard work for the war effort and loyalty to those serving in the military:

While other girls attend their fav'rite cocktail bar,  
Sipping dry martinis, munching caviar,  
There's a girl who's really putting them to shame,  
Rosie is her name.

REFRAIN:

All the day long,  
Whether rain or shine,  
She's a part of the assembly line.  
She's making history,  
Working for victory,  
Rosie, Brrr (Imitate noise of riveting machine),the Riveter.  
Keeps a sharp lookout for sabotage,  
Sitting up there on the fuselage.  
That little frail will do more than a male will do,  
Rosie, Brrr (Imitate noise of riveting machine),the Riveter.  
Rosie's got a boyfriend, Charlie,  
Charlie, he's a Marine.

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<sup>446</sup>"Part of O.W.I.'s New War Song Tips Already Tried in Music Biz," Variety, 9 Dec. 1942, vol. 148, no. 14: 40; "U.S. Popular Music Collection, 1941-1945," Library of Congress.

Rosie is protecting Charlie,  
 Working overtime on the riveting machine.  
 When they gave her a production "E,"  
 She was as proud as a girl could be.  
 There's something true about,  
 Red, white and blue about,  
 Rosie, Brrr, (Imitate noise of riveting machine),the  
 Riveter.<sup>447</sup>

Much more typical of the tunes sponsored and approved  
 of by the OWI was Perry Alexander's up-tempo, though  
 forgettable tune, "Pluggin' Jane":

Now in these days of desperation,  
 There's a gal that saves the nation,  
 She's a super, duper gal!  
 She's right in line and won't resign,  
 To get some bigger dough,  
 She is the best for every test,  
 Just ask our G.I. Joe!

Oh, Pluggin' Jane keeps pluggin' every day  
 She has no time to play  
 Just plugs along all day  
 Oh, Pluggin' Jane we are so proud of you  
 We know that you are true  
 To the Red, White, and Blue  
 When it's over--"Over There"  
 We'll be in clover--For you are so fair and square  
 Oh, Pluggin' Jane keep pluggin' every day

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<sup>447</sup>Redd Evans and John Jacob Loeb, "Rosie the Riveter," (New York: Paramount Music Corp., 1942).

We'll say that you're O.K.  
Keep pluggin' every day.<sup>448</sup>

The third verse of "Pluggin' Jane" is notable for its not-so-subtle suggestion that when peace comes, women should be ready to vacate their wartime jobs so that men returning from the war could have them. The OWI was already concerned with the country's post-war conversion to a peacetime economy. It wanted to make sure that people still did their jobs but would be ready to return to pre-war society. Those who kept their morale for the duration would be rewarded with "our Liberty":

Her courage and her industry  
She gives it all for you and me  
So we can have our Liberty  
Now when this war is over  
And the boys come marching home  
She won't delay to make a way  
Her job will be his own.<sup>449</sup>

It was suggested that since a plea from the Office of War Information for stronger morale songs had not accomplished much,

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<sup>448</sup>Perry Alexander, "Pluggin' Jane," (New York: Perry Alexander Music Publishing, 1945).

<sup>449</sup>Ibid.

the publishers might be required to submit their songs for approval (as was the case with the film industry's movie scripts following the Motion Picture Bureau's transfer to the Foreign Bureau of the OWI), before publication.<sup>450</sup> When the cry of "censorship" went up from the music industry, the OWI was quick to point out that "clearance is not censorship or a means of holding your [song] up. Clearance is--a way to make your [songs] better."<sup>451</sup> Since the broadcasting networks already had a strict code of censorship that forbade any mention of sex, alcohol, or profanity on the air, this threat from the OWI could have amounted to an even more repressive system than the one already in place.

Despite the efforts of the Office of War Information and Tin Pan Alley, the American public was not interested in war songs, at least not the type of war song that the morale builders were pushing. In December 1942, one year following the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, a look at the best selling records in juke boxes and on the radio networks revealed few songs that could be classified

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<sup>450</sup>"Japs to Jeeps, Doughboy's Rose to Der Fuehrer's Face--There's Nary an 'Over There' in the Lot," The Billboard, 9 Jan. 1942, vol. 55, no. 2: 25.

<sup>451</sup>OWI: RG 208; Records of the Domestic Radio Bureau; National Wartime Music Committee: SG 169, WNRC.



as war songs. The "10 Best Sellers on Coin Machines" listed in

Variety, 2 December 1942 were:

1. "White Christmas"
2. "Praise the Lord and Pass the Ammunition"
3. "When the Lights Go on Again"
4. "Daybreak"
5. "Mr. Five by Five"
6. "Dearly Beloved"
7. "Manhattan Serenade"
8. "My Devotion"
9. "Why Don't You Fall in Love with Me?"
10. "There Are Such Things"<sup>452</sup>

Juke box favorites included: "The Strip Polka," "Der Feuhrer's Face," "Here Comes the Navy," "I Had the Craziest Dream," "Brazil," "There'll Never Be Another You," "Sweet Dreams," "For Me and My Gal," "This Is the Army Mr. Jones," and "Moonlight Becomes You."<sup>453</sup>

By the end of December 1942, none of the latter tunes remained on the hit list. Only two of the top ten tunes were related to the war, while the two most popular songs, "White Christmas" and "Mr. Five by Five," had lyrics with absolutely no connection to the war.

Previously, the only march-type song to make Your Hit Parade was "Remember Pearl Harbor," and its popularity had lasted only a

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<sup>452</sup>"10 Best Sellers in Coin-Machines," Variety, 2 Dec. 1942, vol. 148, no. 13: 38.

<sup>453</sup>ibid.

few weeks. Since Your Hit Parade reflected public taste, in the form of what was being bought, it was apparent that the American record-buying public had not yet found a lasting martial war song. "This Is Worth Fighting For," made the number ten spot on 27 June 1942, but it never rose above that, and by 8 August 1942 it had disappeared from Your Hit Parade.<sup>454</sup> "This Is Worth Fighting For" was a war song of the inspirational, non-escapist type. Despite its ballad tempo and the sentimental theme of the lyric, the message of the song was clear and to the point:

I saw a peaceful old valley,  
 With a carpet of corn for the floor,  
 And I heard a voice within me whisper,  
 This Is Worth Fighting For.  
 I saw a little old cabin,  
 And the river that flows by the door,  
 And I heard a voice within me say,  
 This Is Worth Fighting For.  
 Didn't I build that cabin?  
 Didn't I plant that corn?  
 Didn't my folks before me  
 Fight for this country before I was born?  
 I gathered my loved ones around me  
 And I gazed at each face I adore

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<sup>454</sup>"10 Best Sellers on Coin- Machines," Variety, 24 June 1942, vol. 147, no. 2: 44; "10 Best Sellers on Coin-Machines," Variety, Aug. 12, 1942, vol. 147, no. 10: 50.

Then I heard that voice within me thunder  
This Is Worth Fighting For.<sup>455</sup>

The war song that remained in Your Hit Parade's first place for the longest period, through January 1943, was "Don't Sit Under the Apple Tree." Categorizing this a "war song" assumed that the lyrics referred to war-parted lovers, and the phrase, "Till I come marching home" was the clearest war-related idea in the song. Maybe all that was necessary for a song to catch the public's favor was just a hint of the military. "Don't Sit Under the Apple Tree" was also a song of parting, so in that sense it qualified as a war tune. The bright melody and bouncy rhythm, combined with the performance by the Andrews Sisters, put the song on the popular music top sellers charts. It was in first place for five weeks. "He Wears a Pair of Silver Wings" held first place for four weeks, after battling with "Jingle Jangle Jingle," an escapist "cowboy" tune which revealed a cowboy's joy that "there'll be no wedding bells for today." "Johnny Doughboy Found a Rose in Ireland" never hit first place, but it was among the top ten for sixteen weeks.<sup>456</sup>

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<sup>455</sup>Edgar DeLange and Sam H. Stept, "This Is Worth Fighting For," (New York: Harms, Inc., 1942).

<sup>456</sup>Don Tyler, Hit Parade, 108.

Other songs with some war connotation that made Your Hit Parade were: "I Left My Heart at the Stage Door Canteen," (a soldier on leave falls for a canteen hostess but must return to his unit), "I Wonder When My Baby's Coming Home," "When the Lights Go on Again (All Over the World)," "I Came Here to Talk for Joe," "Gobs of Love," (The Sailors' Love Song), and "Three Little Sisters," (about three girls in love with three boys in different branches of the services):<sup>457</sup>

There were Three Little Sisters, Three Little Sisters,  
And each one only in her teens.  
One loved a soldier, one loved a sailor,  
And one loved a lad from the Marines.  
Oh, the Three Little Sisters,  
They were the fairest from Iceland to the Philippines;  
So said the soldier, so said the sailor,  
And so said the lad from the Marines.  
And when the boys marched away,  
The girls said they'd be true until the boys come back  
someday.  
Now the Three Little Sisters, Three Little Sisters,  
Stay home and read their magazines.  
You can tell it to the soldiers, tell it to the sailors,  
And tell it to the Marines.<sup>458</sup>

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<sup>457</sup>Tyler, 108-110.

<sup>458</sup>Irving Taylor and Vic Mizzy, Three Little Sisters, (New York: Santly-Joy-Select, Inc., 1942).

At the close of 1942, "Praise the Lord and Pass the Ammunition" was becoming the most popular war song, and many in Tin Pan Alley and the OWI had hopes that it would become the "Over There" of World War II. "Praise the Lord" was different from the other war tunes in that it was not a ballad. It was out-and-out war propaganda. Its tune had a peppy lilt, and the refrain was simple and had frequent word repetitions so that anyone could hear it once, pick up the tune, and remember it. The simplicity of the song helped boost it onto the popularity charts briefly, but then it disappeared from the best sellers' list. Repetition on the radio and live performances all over the country made Americans soon grow bored with the song. They were ready for the next hit.

By 1942 standards, a song which was not a ballad rarely zoomed into popularity, unless it was a novelty number or had a catchy refrain. Occasionally, tunes like "Jingle Jangle Jingle," "Beer Barrel Polka," "Daddy," "A Tisket, A Tasket," and the "Woodpecker Song" caught the public's ear, but based on the best-selling songs of Your Hit Parade, it was plainly the love ballad that was the perennial favorite. Apparently, despite the OWI's and Tin Pan Alley's best efforts, Americans on the homefront could not be dissuaded from their preference for the nostalgic, romantic, or yearning song. The OWI was interested in songs that would instill

"hatred for the enemy" and a "hardy determination to win" in Americans. William Lewis, of OWI, stated:

If we expose the American people to enough worthy war songs, it's a certainty that some of them should take, just as they've already cottoned to the drivel about "Slap the Jap," "Goodbye Mama, I'm Off to Yokohama," "Remember Pearl Harbor" and the like.<sup>459</sup>

However, as Abel Green, editor of Variety, reminded Lewis, "You can lead the American ears to the microphone or the jukebox, but you can't make 'em like it or buy it."<sup>460</sup> The list of 142 World War II songs published in the Variety 37th Anniversary Issue, January 1943 demonstrates the truth of Green's statement: fewer than ten made it onto any best seller list. Some of the songs that the OWI approved of but the buying public did not were: "America to Victory," "Bang 'Em One for Me," "Hey, Zeke! Your Country's Calling You," "On the Old Assembly Line," "That's Sabotage," "Three Dots and a Dash Mean Victory," "All Out for Freedom," "A Dash of the Red, White and Blue," "Freedom Ring!" "Here's to the Flag! (Keep It Flying Over Here--Over There--Everywhere)," "Let's Get Goin,'" "That Old Glory May Keep Flying," "They Started Somethin' (But We're Gonna'

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<sup>459</sup>Abel Green, Variety 37th Anniversary Issue, 6 Jan. 1943, vol. 149, no. 4: 187.

<sup>460</sup>*Ibid.*

End It)," "The Time Is Now," "We're In to Win," and "There's an 'FDR' in Freedom."<sup>461</sup>

The lack of a popular war song and internal struggles over policies and fee payment eventually led to the demise of the National Wartime Music Committee. It disbanded following disclosure of its failure to come to terms with music publishers on uniform agreements covering performance, recording, and reproduction rights.<sup>462</sup>

The end of the Committee came just when success began to seem possible. Only a few days before the Committee dissolved itself, the members of ASCAP had stepped forward to offer full cooperation with regard to uniform agreements for publishing, recording, and distributing war-related music. Before this time, the federal government had had to negotiate separately with each publisher, performer, or recording company, and the OWI thought a uniform contract agreement would simplify matters. Agents representing artists and songwriters were not as enthusiastic

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<sup>461</sup>"U.S. Popular Music Collection, 1941-1945," Library of Congress.

<sup>462</sup>OWI: RG 208; Records of the Domestic Radio Bureau; National Wartime Music Committee: SG 169, WNRC.

about the government's plans for a single contract for the music industry.<sup>463</sup>

At first the music industry was shocked at the demise of the National Wartime Music Committee, and at the Committee's accusations aimed at Tin Pan Alley. It had faulted ASCAP and Tin Pan Alley for their tardiness in supplying contracts and agreements for copyrights. The music industry asserted that it had always cooperated with the government and would willingly cooperate further if the government would only explain what it wanted done. In reply, the Committee had, according to Abel Green, "gasped in surprise, stuttered that it didn't want nothin' from nobody, and that it had been misquoted--and then scuttled itself."<sup>464</sup> The Committee voted itself out of existence in Washington D.C. on 13 April 1943.

The government immediately announced that a new committee would be formed with more than advisory power to push through the standard contract forms which the OWI desired. The National Wartime Music Committee could actually do nothing but advise and

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<sup>463</sup>"Wartime Music Committee Quits After Exposure of Failure to Get Co-op from Trade; New Group Due," Variety, 14 April, 1943, vol. 150, no. 5: 45.

<sup>464</sup>*Ibid.*, 54.



recommend. In late April 1943, the OWI set up a new, streamlined version of the National Wartime Music Committee, with Jack Joy of the War Department as chairman. This new committee, now called the Wartime Music Committee, undertook the task of setting up uniform contracts between government agencies and the music industry, talent agencies, and various music-related unions and guilds.<sup>465</sup>

In May 1943, the OWI once again attempted to mobilize the music business into a "psychological fighting force" in the war effort. Abel Green, the editor of Variety, was named as special consultant and advisor to the Office of War Information's newly created Performance Division, with instructions to set up a Composers' War Council formed from Tin Pan Alley and Hollywood songwriters. The purpose of the Council was "to harness the talents and resources of America's songwriters to further the war effort,"<sup>466</sup> by putting patriotic popular music to stirring wartime use. The Committee was to parallel the OWI's messages on "rationing, button-your-lip, etc." Green prophesied that certain

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<sup>465</sup>OWI: RG 208; Records of the Domestic Radio Bureau; Wartime Music Committee: SG 169, WNRC.

<sup>466</sup>Mobilizing Composers to Go All out in Furthering War Effort Via Music, Variety, 19 May 1943, vol. 150, no. 10: 1, 32.

types of tunes might become a part of regular propaganda messages, with suggestions to broadcasters and other media that such songs could "ideally fit the pattern of what we are trying to project."<sup>467</sup> Abel Green relished his role as special consultant to the OWI and immediately began making recommendations for songs. He bemoaned the failure of a solid song on behalf of the Army nurses who were "right up there at the fighting front." And he pointed to the fact that there was still no satisfactory song on behalf of the Women's Auxiliary Army Corps. "The WAAC Is in Back of You," written by WAAC, Lt. Ruby Jane Douglas (Leeds Music) was acceptable, but most WAAC songs, in his opinion, had been "too wacky."<sup>468</sup> Songs from Tin Pan Alley were not what the women wanted for marching music: "I've Got a WAAC on My Hands and a Wave in My Hair," "I'm Wacky over Something in Khaki," "She's My Little Sweetheart in a Captain's Uniform," "I'm Doing the WAAC, WAAC, WAAC Walk," "Something New Has Been Added to the Army," "Sally WAAC," "There'll Be a New Style Bonnet in the Easter Parade," "He's Got a WAVE in His Hair and a WAAC on His Hands," and

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<sup>467</sup>Ibid., 1.

<sup>468</sup>Ibid., 32.

"Nimitz is the Limitz," (supposedly a sentiment of the WAVES).<sup>469</sup>

"In My Little G.I. Shoes" was typical of these songs:

In my little GI shoes  
I walk along the street.  
In my little cotton hose,  
I give the boys a treat.  
My skirt looks like a barracks bag,  
My hat just like a pot.  
But I am in the Army now  
And glad with what I got.  
In my raincoat extra large,  
I look just like a sack,  
But I'm in the Army now  
And glad to be a WAC.  
The Army issues clothes alright;  
They make you look an awful sight.<sup>470</sup>

Atypical of the songs written about women in the military was Meredith Willson's "Yankee Doodle Girl," which did not poke fun at the WAAC or belittle women's service:

'Ten-shun, you Americans,  
The Yankee Doodle Girl has gone to war,  
And when you mention,  
True Americans,  
You'll mention ev'ry woman in the Corps.  
Ev'ry Miss in the ranks,  
Means a hit for the Yanks,

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<sup>469</sup>"Not What WAAC Wants," The Billboard, 6 Feb. 1943, vol. 55, no. 6: 21; "U.S. Popular Music Collection, 1941-1945," Library of Congress.

<sup>470</sup>"In My Little GI Shoes," WAC Song Book, (Fort Lee, VA: Special Services, Women's Army Corps Training Center, n.d.), 6.

For the Yankee Doodle Boy across the foam.  
'Ten-shun, you Americans,  
Till the Yankee Doodle Girl comes home.  
With the Army, the Air Corps,  
The Flag to do and dare for,  
There's a hundred thousand Waacs steady and  
strong,  
For her sweetheart, her brother,  
Her father and her mother,  
There is Red, White and Blue in her song,  
As she goes marching along.<sup>471</sup>

The prolific Fred Waring and his lyricist Jack Dolph produced an earnest song for the WAVES, but its message was one that was controversial. In essence the song said that by joining the WAVES a woman could release a sailor from a safe stateside job and send him into combat. To many women, with men in the Navy, this was not a particularly appealing thought. There was a different standard applied to women in the military who released a man for combat as opposed to one man taking another man's place. Service men in clerical jobs did not always appreciate being replaced for combat; mothers did not want a daughter to enlist if it meant that a son would be sent to his death; and a woman whose husband or sweetheart was

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<sup>471</sup>Meredith Willson, "Yankee Doodle Girl," (New York: Words & Music, Inc., 1943).

killed overseas did not like to think that but for her or some other woman he would have been safe at a desk job.<sup>472</sup> The idea that by joining the military a woman might send a loved one, hers or someone else's, to the front lines made the choice more complicated for some women. Although its title might suggest otherwise, "(WAVES) In Navy Blue," did not promote Navy service by telling how flattering the Waves uniforms were:

Oh, it started like a pebble when you toss it from  
the shore,  
And the pebble makes a ripple and the ripple many  
more,  
As they spread across the ocean,  
from each ripple comes a wave,  
And each WAVE will add a sailor to our navy strong  
and brave.  
Then each sailor boards a battle ship a-heading out  
to war,  
And his fighting heart is happier than when he was  
ashore.  
Thus the countless thousand ripples grow to  
countless thousand WAVES,  
And the WAVES account for countless thousand men  
our Navy saves.  
For every WAVE in Navy blue,  
There's a sailor on the sea.  
And for ev'ry hand at the WAVES' command there's a  
mighty fist against the enemy.

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<sup>472</sup>Mattie E. Treadwell, The Women's Army Corps: Special Studies: The United States in World War II, (Washington, D.C.: Office of the Chief of Military History, Department of the Army, 1953), 184.

And for ev'ry heart that will do her part there's a  
sailor's heart that's true.

We know you're all standing fast till the Fleet  
comes home at last.

HAIL WAVES, NAVY'S FOR YOU!<sup>473</sup>

The Composers War Council tried to point songwriters to the subjects that needed a boost from music. The OWI, since it knew where the possible morale problems (fear of public complacency was damaging the war effort through absenteeism, job switching, strikes, decreasing voluntary enlistments, and the growing reluctance of civilians to sacrifice material goods)<sup>474</sup> were, prompted the Composers War Council. The music industry was perfectly willing to be coached on the matter of wartime morale. As stated in a letter dated February 17, 1943, from William Burke Miller, the War Program Manager of NBC's Public Service Department thought that:

In Washington they know where the morale problem is most crucial at a given time, and it is to these points they would prefer to direct entertainment and programs

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<sup>473</sup>Fred Waring and Jack Dolph, "(WAVES) In Navy Blue," (New York: Words & Music, Inc., 1943).

<sup>474</sup>OWI: RG 208; "Surveys of Public Attitudes": 22 December 1943: SG 118, WNRC.

rather than the "hit or miss" fashion that appears to be the present practice.<sup>475</sup>

Green thought the OWI might even become more involved with popular songs than merely casually endorsing them if some suitable piece of song material were to come along. He hinted that the OWI might "throw the force of the federal government" behind a song with material suitable to OWI's efforts.<sup>476</sup> This meant production, distribution, and promotion of a song would be paid for by the government.

Another reason the OWI gave for wanting "name" composers involved with the new Composers War Council was the fear of Nazi propaganda. Morale experts in Washington, D.C. pointed to the example of the German song "Lili Marlene," which had been adopted as a favorite tune by Allied soldiers. "'Lili Marlene'[is] No.1 on the Nazi hit-parade, to which Time magazine and March of Time both gave wide publicity."<sup>477</sup> According to Green:

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<sup>475</sup>OWI: RG 208, memo from William Burk to Keagan Bayles, 17 Feb. 1943, Records of the Domestic Radio Bureau, Wartime Music Committee: SG 169, WNRC.

<sup>476</sup>"Mobilizing Composers to Go All out in Furthering War Effort Via Music," Variety, 19 May 1943, vol. 150, no. 10: 32.

<sup>477</sup>Ibid.

Unofficially, D.C. fears that the Nazis may turn the situation around; DX [radio] our troops in North Africa, and elsewhere, that "Lili Marlene" is a good enough song to get wide magazine and national network publicity in America, that, "what's the matter, can't your American songwriters turn out as pretty tunes as 'Lili Marlene,' and you see, we're not so terrible if we can give the world such pretty music."<sup>478</sup>

Abel Green's advisory position with the Office of War

Information did not last long. On 24 May 1943, the Tin Pan Alley and Hollywood composers preempted the federal government's control and formed the previously mentioned voluntary association, the Music War Committee of the American Theater Wing, with Oscar Hammerstein II as president.<sup>479</sup> The songwriters, of their own volition, formulated a practical Music War Committee, primed to do its share in the all-out victory effort.

The new Music War Committee was a broad cross-section of the music business. The MWC included not only songwriters but also interpretive artists, recording executives, music publishers, conductors, newspapermen, music critics, labor leaders, educators, and civilian groups. The latter made up of public school music

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<sup>478</sup>ibid.

<sup>479</sup>"Songwriters' Own Positive Approach to War Song Problem Shelves OWI Hypo; MWC Jumping All Hurdles," Variety, 26 May 1943, vol. 150, no. 11: 3, 54.



teachers, band directors, community orchestra leaders, and church choir directors.<sup>480</sup>

The Music War Committee decided at its first meeting, 24 May 1943, that all the negative focus on the quality and quantity of war songs would come to an end. The approach was to be positive: "No matter the hurdles (publishers' tepidity toward war songs, radio listeners' aversion to martial 6/8 tempoed songs, etc.)--these are being ignored."<sup>481</sup> The Committee saw as its task exposing Americans to a new idiom in popular song, regardless of the fact that World War I saw a marching army, or that ballads of the "My Buddy" type were popularized by vaudeville headliners, whereas dance bands and radio dominated the current music field. The Committee concluded that songwriters should stop writing songs which fit World War I; they should adapt their patriotic and military ideas to the 1943 pattern of show business and showmanship.<sup>482</sup> Tin Pan Alley would write war songs that would "swing" or were "hot." Musical style did not matter; the Music War

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<sup>480</sup>*Ibid.*, 3.

<sup>481</sup>*Ibid.*, 54.

<sup>482</sup>*Ibid.*

Committee looked for a song that every American would recognize as a symbol of the war.

At the Committee's first formal meeting, invited guests included the OWI's William B. Lewis and Jack Joy of the War Department (and also host of The Army Hour on NBC). Lewis had what he called "a few private opinions" about what was wrong with the new war songs. He counseled members of the Committee to forget the "frustration of maybe-I-will-lose-my-girl, or is-my-girl-back-home-two-timing-me," and instead write "positive, assertive songs." He cautioned composers not to "fret about the lights going on all over the world; let's sing about victory to come-the Gay White Way display will take care of itself." Lewis could not resist a criticism of the Music War Committee's president, Oscar Hammerstein II, when he said, "Even though great is the song, 'The Last Time I Saw Paris' . . . maybe now we should sing of 'The Next Time I See Paris.'" Lewis also insisted that songwriters stop their narrow view of the war by focusing solely on Tokyo and Berlin:

Let's inculcate the idea as strongly as possible that this is a global war, not restricted to any one capital. From the Aleutians to the South Pacific, from the Lowlands to the Balkans, there's more bitter warfare

and hatred manifested right now than around the immediate geographical Axis capital.<sup>483</sup>

Still, a song with a fighting, positive declaration would not matter much if the public refused to buy it. Bandleader-songwriter Eddie DeLange's "This is Worth Fighting For," an OWI-favored song, was briefly popular in the latter part of 1942. But he said that whenever he played it, somebody in uniform would invariably step on the dance floor and yell at him, "Yes, then why aren't you in uniform?" Understandably, bandleaders like DeLange often had an aversion to playing such tunes no matter how much the OWI liked them. And, after all, he explained, "the band's major task on a hotel or cafe job is to get 'em up on the dance floor--and war songs haven't been able to do it." According to DeLange, there was also a problem for composers, "We can't get war songs played."<sup>484</sup> Other composers present at the Music War Committee's birth were Billy Rose, Richard Rodgers, Charlie Tobias, Fred Ahlert, Allan Sloan, Buck Ram, Robert Russell, and Gladys Shelley. They, too, were vocal in their appraisal of war song hazards and agreed with Delange that it was nearly impossible to get a dance band to play

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<sup>483</sup>ibid.

<sup>484</sup>ibid.

war songs. Robert Russell stressed that publisher Jack Robbins was "literally screaming at the bands' embargo--unconscious as it was--on 'Comin' in on a Wing and a Prayer,' until Eddie Cantor with three broadcasts projected it into hitdom."<sup>485</sup>

Despite these barriers, Oscar Hammerstein II pledged himself, along with many successful composers such as Ira Gershwin, Jerome Kern, Irving Berlin, Johnny Mercer, Arthur Schwartz, Vincent Youmans, Mack Gordon, Harry Warren, and Leo Robin, to keep writing war songs, although he emphasized, as did Rodgers, Rose, and the others that "publishers' shelves and safes are cluttered with war songs gathering dust because nobody will perform them."<sup>486</sup> Lewis suggested that "worthwhile" songs could possibly by-pass the dance bands and recalcitrant publishers by going directly to the greatest source of dissemination: radio. It was also suggested by Billy Rose that a Victory Music Committee be set up for non-profit publication of these 'worthwhile' songs if publishers refused to issue them.<sup>487</sup>

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<sup>485</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>486</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>487</sup> *Ibid.*

As head of the radio division of the OWI, W.B. Lewis directed composers to include certain themes in their songs for the "best effect." Some song material was not particularly romantic, he conceded, such as the importance of salvaging fats or collecting scrap. But Lewis directed the Music War Committee to turn out songs that would get those ideas across in a manner that would entertain as well as educate. Fred Waring at least was willing to give Lewis's idea a try. Waring's publishing firm shortly thereafter produced "Save the Grease" for the federal government's campaign to conserve the use of household fats:

Everybody has a job to do  
Including me, including you  
Tho' the kitchen may, to you, be quite a bore  
Its credential is essential  
In the war

Save the grease from the potsy  
It's for peace!  
Make it hotsy  
And we'll pour it on the Nazi  
And the Nips,  
Japs, Nips!

Keep that fat from the skillet  
For a rat!  
Don't you spill it!  
Uncle Sam will then distill it  
For the guns!

Tanks! Ships!  
Just a drop is as heavy as the taxes

It will sharpen up the axe for the Axis  
 In the haste of your toil  
 Don't make waste of the oil!  
 Let it sizzle, let it boil for the foe  
 Mrs. America, let's go!<sup>488</sup>

Like the majority of the songs written to satisfy OWI directives, "Save the Grease" never became popular and had little play outside of Fred Waring's dance band, The Pennsylvanians, who of course premiered the song. But Waring's efforts did not go unnoticed; in a letter dated 23 February 1944, Wilder Breckenridge, chairman of the American Fat Salvage Committee, wrote to John Van Nostrand in the OWI's New York Deputy Chief's office: "Thanks so much for your help in getting the Fred Waring 'Save the Grease' song published. It's a peach and we can make awfully good use of it."<sup>489</sup>

Casting about for inspiration, the Music War Committee and the OWI suggested that composers visit military training camps and there become "indoctrinated with the proper spirit." The Committee also observed that over seventy professional

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<sup>488</sup>Joe Sanders, "Save the Grease: Dedicated to the American Housewife," (New York: Words and Music, Inc., 1943).

<sup>489</sup>OWI: RG 208; letter, 23 Feb. 1944, from Wilder Breckenridge to John Van Nostrand, Records of the Domestic Radio Bureau; American Theater Wings' Music War Committee: SG 169, WNRC.

songwriters were currently serving in the military, and it was thought that "proper" war songs would come from these composers who faced "action-under-fire."<sup>490</sup>

The American Theater Wing also added its ideas to the search for war songs. It sponsored a new war song contest, with four categories designed to include all levels of songwriters from the amateur to the professional to be judged by the Music War Committee. With luck, perhaps a song or songs would come from the contest that would provide a "sufficient cushion" until the professional writers "get the ball rolling."<sup>491</sup>

The Music War Committee was confronted with the problem of getting "likely" tunes before the public. Hammerstein and others decided that the best plan was to spread selected songs throughout bands, theaters, nightclubs, schools, and radio programs, if necessary, by-passing those publishers who were unable (or unwilling) to exploit this type of song. A subcommittee, meeting once a week, was organized to select likely songs for promotion (no

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<sup>490</sup>OWI: RG 208; Records of the Domestic Radio Bureau; American Theater Wings' Music War Committee: SG 169, WNRC.

<sup>491</sup>"Songwriters' Own Positive Approach to War Song Problem Shelves OWI Hypo; MWC Jumping All Hurdles," Variety, 26 May 1943, vol. 150, no. 11: 3.

professional songwriters were included on this subcommittee). This song-judging subcommittee was comprised of well-known music business celebrities including Paul Whiteman, Paul Robeson, Olin Downes, Franklin P. Adams, W.C. Handy, William Morris, Jr., Abel Green, Lila Belle Pitts, A.J. McKosker, E.C. Mills, Manie Sacks, Willie Frenberg, Al Goodman, and Howard Dietz. The Music War Committee also hoped to have a commercial radio program use one selected song each week, and also to broadcast a "You Pick the Song" segment, with the general public invited to select the war song they liked best.<sup>492</sup>

With guidelines in place, committees organized, and "name" musicians on both coasts pledged to the Music War Committee, a call was sent to all composers to submit unpublished materials: specifically, the Music War Committee asked for harmonized lead sheets, with lyrics clearly printed, the names of the composer and author, and the copyright number. Then the Council waited for the war songs to deluge their offices.<sup>493</sup>

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<sup>492</sup>"Soldier Songsmiths Seen Writing the Most Believable War Tunes," Variety, 9 June 1943, vol. 150, no. 12: 1.

<sup>493</sup>"Sifting Committee, Other Machinery Oiled to Speed Worthy War Songs," Variety, 16 June 1943, vol. 151, no. 1: 41.



Not every Tin Pan Alley composer jumped on the OWI's bandwagon. Irving Berlin, one of the most respected popular music composers of the twentieth century (and a man who had written dozens of war songs), thought all of the directives from the federal government and the machinations of the various music committees would not produce the "great war song." He said, "I have never believed that the 'Over There' of this war will come through contests or specific rules laid down by the OWI. Important war songs just aren't written that way."<sup>494</sup> Berlin thought Tin Pan Alley should be allowed to go on as usual, without any restrictions, and eventually the right song would come along if it had not already. Berlin also astutely pointed out an important job Tin Pan Alley could do to help the war effort. In line with the OWI's directives, he agreed that special songs presenting the country's point of view would be helpful, such as those praising democracy and liberty. Berlin reminded Variety readers that his composition "Any Bonds Today" had done a good job for the Treasury Department, helping to sell bonds although the song was not commercial in the sense that "Any Bonds Today?" was printed, distributed, and handled in Washington by the Treasury Department. Berlin also

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<sup>494</sup> "That Great War Song Will Write Itself Sans Contests": Irving Berlin," Variety, 23 June 1943, vol. 151, no. 2: 1, 31.

signed over his royalty payments to the war bond drive, as he did with several of his songs during the war.<sup>495</sup>

Berlin argued that music publishers (himself among them) could not be expected to spend their money to publicize non-commercial songs. Berlin proposed that a publishing company be formed for the sole purpose of printing and exploiting these songs. And if the government paid for this enterprise, money could easily be raised through subscriptions from the music industry. Berlin envisioned that civilian workers drawing the minimum wage would staff this special publishing house. Then the OWI could tell the composers' committee what subjects it wanted addressed in song, and songwriters could be assigned certain song subjects. The main object would be to get ideas across to the public through songs. "A good song on a subject, not necessarily propaganda but an amusing idea, would do much more than reams of speeches."<sup>496</sup> Berlin seemed to agree with Abel Green's assessment of the role of music in the war touted in his column "Show Biz's Role in the War," in Variety, 17 December 1942: Green wrote that contributions from show business and showmen might seem of less military

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<sup>495</sup>ibid.

<sup>496</sup>ibid., 1.

importance than well-equipped regiments, but "lyricists and songwriters win battles, too. One Kate Smith broadcast of Irving Berlin's 'God Bless America' is worth a thousand recruiting speeches."<sup>497</sup>

There were other composers who spoke out on the war song problem. Harold Arlen heartily agreed that as long as the war was mechanized there would be no rousing tunes, at least none with the chance of repeating the stirring success of "Over There"; a song that was recognized as the war anthem by all Americans, soldiers and civilians alike during the last world war. Arlen said, "It's very difficult for a songwriter to get excited about a jeep, or a plane, or a parachute jumper, or any other of the facets that go to make up the present war and put them down in song form so that everyone feels like singing or whistling it."<sup>498</sup> Arlen thought that the best possibility for a war song was one that dealt with the future and the "world we're fighting to preserve." The great song of the war would be one which told Americans about the "world of tomorrow" and gave everyone a "clearer understanding of their rights." Arlen

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<sup>497</sup>Abel Green, "Show Biz's Role in the War," Variety, 17 Dec. 1941, vol. 145, no. 2: 1, 22.

<sup>498</sup>"This War Doesn't Lend Itself to a Big Hit Song Thinks Harold Arlen," Variety, 23 June 1943, vol.151, no. 2: 54.

did not think another "Over There" was possible because "the idea of getting over there has lost its kick, in the sense of adventure."

Instead of a martial air, Arlen believed the war song would "just pop up one day and be a simple, sincere effort about the world to come."<sup>499</sup> Arlen's ideas were counter to the OWI's plans for a war song; the government was still worried about complacency and urged its agencies to keep the defeat of the Axis powers before the public at all times. Songs that spoke of the post-war world were strongly discouraged by the OWI.

Frank Loesser's "Praise the Lord and Pass the Ammunition," spent close to three months on Variety's "10 Best Sellers" list and sold over 450,000 copies of sheet music in its first two months of publication and was, for a while, the best hope of Tin Pan Alley to repeat the success of "Over There." But Loesser had his doubts that a best-selling martial song would be written during World War II. He did not think Americans really wanted a true war song, one that was martial and/or factual. And if such a song were written, Loesser doubted that Americans would buy it. He was aware of just how far a songwriter could go in portraying the realities of war,

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<sup>499</sup>ibid.

both on the battlefield and on the homefront.<sup>500</sup> When asked about his song writing methods by Variety's editor, Abel Green, Loesser was of the opinion that the current war songs, of necessity, evaded the unpleasant facts of war and death. He recognized the fact that in order to sell a song to the American public, the lyrics could not reveal much, if any, of the realities of war. In Loesser's words: "You stay in the middle sort of. You give her [the housewife in the listening audience] hope without facts; glory without blood. You give her a legend neatly trimmed."<sup>501</sup> Loesser compared song marketing with selling Jell-O. "If you want to sell a housewife Jell-O you don't tell her: 'Madame, it is highly probable that your son is coming home . . . totally blind. But cheer up, tonight choose one of the six delicious flavors and be happy with America's finest

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<sup>500</sup>"10 Best Sellers on Coin Machines," Variety, 14 October 1942, vol.148, no., 6:40; \_\_\_\_\_, 21 October 1942, vol. 148, no. 7: 48; \_\_\_\_\_, 28 October 1942, vol. 148, no. 8: 40; \_\_\_\_\_, 4 November 1942, vol. 148, no. 9: 42; \_\_\_\_\_, 11 November 1942, vol. 148, no. 10: 38; \_\_\_\_\_, 18 November 1942, vol. 148, no. 11: 38; \_\_\_\_\_, 25 November 1942, vol. 148, no. 12: 42; \_\_\_\_\_, 2 December 1942, vol. 148, no. 13: 38; \_\_\_\_\_, 9 December 1942, vol. 148, no. 14: 38; \_\_\_\_\_, 16 December 1942, vol. 149, no. 1: 36; \_\_\_\_\_, 23 December 1942, vol. 149, no. 2: 40; "'Praise the Lord' Wow 450,000 Copies Despite Frowns from the Clergy," 18 November 1942, vol. 148, no. 11: 3.

<sup>501</sup>Abel Green, "Loesser on War Songs," Variety, 27 Oct. 1943, vol. 152, no. 7: 37.

dessert." On the other hand, Loesser saw the danger in too much cheerful confidence in song composition. Composers should not deliberately lie to the American people by casting the war in glowing terms. For example, one should never say, "Madam, our army is so smart and well equipped that all your son does is sit in an impregnable tank and shoot down Japs like flies, and you can expect him home for Christmas in better health than ever."<sup>502</sup> Both Loesser and Arlen saw the lack of a war song as stemming from the actualities of the war and not the failure of songwriters to produce. Although reports from the battlefield were filtered through the the OWI and the War and Navy Department's tightly controlled news coverage, by October 1943 (the date of Loesser's interview), the U.S. news media began printing explicit photographs of soldiers on the battlefields. This included the first pictures of dead American soldiers. American policy makers feared people would react as Loesser, Arlen, and other songwriters evidently had. Until September 1943, the government purposely withheld pictures of American dead fearing they would have negative consequences such as leading viewers to favor withdrawal from the war before total victory was achieved. Fortunately for the War Department,

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<sup>502</sup>ibid.

the more open policy enabled the government to make use of the pictures to intensify public commitment to the war effort.<sup>503</sup>

Unfortunately for the Great American War Song search, this policy did not have a similar effect on Tin Pan Alley. As more and more reports of the fierceness of the fighting found their way into the American media, it became more difficult for the Tin Pan Alley songwriters to glorify war--whether righteous or not--in song. It seemed frivolous and dishonest.

The Music War Committee of the American Theater Wing had cooperation from every branch of the music industry. Network radio shows offered air time for war songs, band leaders and other performers were willing to perform the tunes, advertising agencies were ready to offer their services in the exploitation of war songs; the only thing that remained was for composers to turn out the songs.

Meanwhile, the American public was listening to "You'll Never Know (Just How Much I Love You)," "Paper Doll," "Don't Get Around Much Anymore," and "As Time Goes By." The only songs with war

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<sup>503</sup>Roeder, The Censored War, 5-6.

themes on the hit charts the summer of 1943 were "Comin' in on a Wing and a Prayer" and "Johnny Got a Zero."<sup>504</sup>

The first two songs selected by the Music War Committee for the U.S. Treasury Department's Third Defense Bond Drive of 9 September 1943, were: "Swing the Quota" and "Get on the Bondwagon." Although bandleaders such as Ray Heatherton, Vincent Lopez, and Glenn Miller recorded and played these tunes, the songs died after the defense bond drive was over. Even Bing Crosby, who was the most popular male singer in America at that time, couldn't popularize "Get on the Bondwagon." Evidently, even "Der Bingle" could not sell a mediocre war bond tune.<sup>505</sup> Other songs selected in the first rounds of Music War Committee judging were: "One More Mile," "The Message Got Through," "Has Hitler Made a Monkey Out of You?," "We're Melting All Our Memories," "Voice of the Underground," "Yankee Doodle Ain't Doodlin' Now," "Have You Written Him Today?" "I Get That Democratic Feeling," "I Spoke with Jefferson at Guadalcanal," "In Business (Since 1776)," and

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<sup>504</sup>"10 Best Sellers in Coin-Machines," Variety, 28 July, 1943, vol. 151, no. 7: 36.

<sup>505</sup>"Music War Group Picks 2 Tunes for Ballyhoo of Defense Bond Drive," Variety, 11 Aug. 1943, vol. 151, no. 9: 39; Palmer, All You Need Is Love, 155.



"Unconditional Surrender."<sup>506</sup> As with the previous Music War Committee selections, these songs remained buried at the bottom of the sheet music stack or record pile. Meanwhile, copies of "Pistol Packin' Mama" by Al Dexter on an Okeh recording were so scarce that a black market developed around the recording and price gouging was common. Some stores charged as much as \$1.25 per copy (35¢ and 50¢ were the regular prices of records). Many stores refused to sell a copy of a record in heavy demand unless the customer also purchased a slow-selling record that had been on the shelf for months.<sup>507</sup> By 13 October 1943, "Pistol Packin' Mama" was in the number two spot on Variety's "10 Best Sellers on Coin Machines" and on 10 November 1943, it reached the number one spot, where it remained on the top-seller list for twenty-five weeks.<sup>508</sup> None of the Music War Committee's selections became hits. The top selling songs of 1943 avoided any mention of the war. These songs included (in descending order of their popularity):

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<sup>506</sup>"New Crop of War Songs Attuned to 3rd War Loan Drive," Variety, 25 Aug. 1943, vol. 151, no. 11: 39.

<sup>507</sup>"'Pistol' in Black Market Demand," Variety, 15 Sept. 1943, vol. 152, no.1: 45.

<sup>508</sup>Tyler, Hit Parade, 113.

"People Will Say We're in Love," "You'll Never Know," "Brazil," "That Old Black Magic," "As Time Goes By," "Sunday, Monday, or Always," "You'd Be So Nice to Come Home To," "I've Heard That Song Before," "Don't Get Around Much Anymore," and "It Can't Be Wrong." The only song in the first twenty best sellers with a war connection was Jimmy McHugh's "Comin' in on a Wing and a Pray'r," while the rest of the top twenty were love songs, good dance tunes, or novelty numbers.<sup>509</sup>

Tin Pan Alley did make a valiant effort to supply the Treasury Department with songs for the War Loan Drives. Eight campaigns to raise money to pay for the war relied heavily on radio and the music industry for promotion. The OWI, through its Domestic Radio Bureau, usually produced programs that were broadcast nationwide and appealed to all Americans to aid the war effort by purchasing war bonds. One of the functions of music was to get the point across to the American public in a pleasant fashion, so that people would purchase even more than their quota. The war loan drives were most often scheduled to coincide with important American holidays or events; these drives occurred twice a year (except in 1944 when there were three loan drives). One of the most

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<sup>509</sup>Margaret S. Wells, "Music in the News," The Billboard, 29 Jan. 1944, vol. 56, no. 5: 62.

successful war loan programs was broadcast on Thanksgiving evening, 23 November 1944, from 8:30 until 10:00 P.M., Pacific War Time. Carried on the NBC network and entitled, "Let's Talk Turkey to Japan," the goal of the Sixth War Loan Drive was to raise \$5 billion for the war effort. The program featured show business personalities, such as Robert Young, Jack Haley, Bob Hope, Joan Davis, Jack Benny, Amos 'n' Andy, and Kay Kyser and his orchestra, performing skits and scenes to encourage war bond purchases. Others with prominent parts in the show were: Bing Crosby singing "Accentuate the Positive," and "White Christmas"; the Ken Darby Singers performing "Let's Talk Turkey to Japan," and "The Time Is Now," ("The time is now/The time is now/It's time to read the writing on the wall"); Dinah Shore singing "Always," and "Together," Ginny Simms with "The Man I Love," Dick Powell singing "You Always Hurt the One You Love," and a finale featuring Eddie Cantor performing a medley of George M. Cohan songs: "Yankee Doodle Dandy," "Harrigan," "Mary's a Grand Old Name," "Give My Regards to Broadway," "You're a Grand Old Flag, and "Over There." The program concluded with the NBC orchestra and the Ken Darby Chorus performing "The Star Spangled Banner," while Eddie Cantor made one more plea for Americans to give, "everything we have. We don't dare make it easy on ourselves . . . when by doing so, we make it

harder on the men who are fighting for us!"<sup>510</sup> There was something appealing to listeners of all ages and backgrounds in these bond drive shows, but the thrust of such programs was to invoke the listeners' emotions, to manipulate them into spending more money for bonds than they had planned. The shows were not-so-subtle forms of bribery. Robert Young asked Thanksgiving Day listeners, who probably had stuffed themselves with whatever holiday foods their ration coupons would allow and were lounging around the living radio, to visualize:

What some Americans are going through . . . what some are giving to hasten victory . . . think how anxious you are to bring your loved ones home faster and then--when you're asked if you'll have another couple hundred dollars worth of the Sixth War Loan . . . take another helping.<sup>511</sup>

These war loan drives depended heavily on popular music to lighten the mood of the shows. There was concern that people would turn off their radios if they became bored with bond appeals, so favorite entertainers and popular songs were interspersed throughout the program to act as enticement to keep listeners

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<sup>510</sup>OWI: RG 208, Domestic Radio Bureau; SG 169, "'Let's Talk Turkey to Japan:' N.B.C.'s Sixth War Loan Program, 23 Nov. 1944: 1-55, WNRC.

<sup>511</sup>Ibid, 2.

tuned in to the show. The idea was to continue the pattern set by pre-war variety shows, so that the listener would be familiar with the format: one that substituted commercials for war bonds in place of the usual advertisements for coffee or laundry detergent. The programs featured songs that were on the popular music charts, as well as patriotic standards plus a few songs calculated to boost bond buying.

The Seventh War Loan Drive, sponsored by the U.S. Treasury Department, relied heavily on the popular music industry to convince a war-weary population that there was still much to do to finish the war. This was an especially difficult task since the bond drive was to begin on May 14, 1945, a week after V-E Day, and end on June 30, 1945. The goal was to raise \$14 billion dollars, with half of this, \$7 billion, coming from individual subscriptions. This was the largest quota ever set for individuals, and with Hitler defeated, Americans would want to know why such a tremendous amount was needed. Why should Americans dig into their savings accounts and current income when victory did not seem to be too far away? The Treasury Department used radio to convince the American public of the necessity of this staggering loan drive. Radio pleas emphasized the fact that the war was not yet over and people must continue with their war jobs and give full support to

all the home front activities that could "speed the final day of victory." The Treasury Department counted on the fact that Americans' savings were at an all-time high. It was estimated that between 1 January 1940 and 31 December 1944, Americans saved \$128 billion. Added to that figure was the \$14 billion savings from 1 January 1945 to May 1945, which brought the amount Americans had to invest in war bonds within the goals set by the Treasury Department. As the Office of War Information told its Domestic Radio Bureau, "The money is there, if people can be persuaded to invest it." To this end, radio utilized the themes that stressed continuation of the war and the responsibility of every American to "support this war until final victory is won on every front." Americans were reminded that their dollars were needed to pay the costs of the war. Because of the distance and the logistics involved in moving fighting men from Europe to the Pacific; the fact that the Japanese were entrenched on hundreds of tiny islands; the creation of a whole new air force for the Pacific war (Superfortresses were replaced with the jet-propelled combat planes, the P-80 or "Shooting Star"); and also the medical attention that the sick, wounded, and disabled would need, (as well as the pay and benefits voted by Congress for service personnel once the war was over)--all of this would have to be paid for by the American

people. The Pacific war was to be an expensive one. Americans were encouraged to "back the attack" with personal sacrifice and buy more bonds than ever before. Radio planned to compare the hardships of the fighting men with the civilian hardship of buying another bond or an extra one.<sup>512</sup> Americans were asked to bear their "full responsibility" for the war effort just as the soldiers and sailors were bearing theirs. A "Fact Sheet" from the OWI encouraged radio stations to remind Americans that, "We've promised our fighting men overwhelming superiority in weapons and equipment," and the only way to maintain this is to help "pay for the tools of victory" by investing every available dollar in war bonds. There was the inference that Americans must keep their promises to the military, because after all, the fighting men were really their fathers, husbands, brothers, sweethearts, and friends. Radio was encouraged to "give it all the dramatic impact that you

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<sup>512</sup>Participation in the effort to sell war bonds was not limited to musical variety shows; radio dramas like "Hasten the Day," written by Pauline Gilsdorf for CBS included several shows comparing the relatively slight sacrifices of civilians with that of American soldiers, and in several scripts the remedy to assuage the guilt of both the characters and their audience was to purchase more war bonds. OWI: RG 208; "Hasten the Day," 119 scripts, August 1943-December 1944, SG 152, WNRC.

can by reminding your listeners of the incomparable sacrifices our fighting men are making."<sup>513</sup>

Music was to play an important role in making every listener feel that he could not afford to refuse to buy an extra bond. Tin Pan Alley submitted songs for the Treasury Department's approval. The same guidelines that applied to radio programs were recommended for war loan songs. Songwriters were prompted to convey to Americans, in song, how urgently their dollars were needed to pay the cost of the war. And that personal sacrifice on the part of civilians was necessary. The American people should buy more war bonds than ever before. In 1945, songwriters responded with: "Buy Plenty of Bonds," by Robert Miller; "Your Pot of Dough," by Robert Sour; "We're All in It Together," by Leonard Whiting; "This May Be Your Last Chance," by Vic Mizzi; "Let's Back Them with a Bond," by Nick and Charles Kenny; "Get Out and Buy Those E Bonds," by Herman Hupfeld; and "Idle Dollars, Busy War Dollars," by Andy Razaf, J. Rosemond Johnson, and Harold Rome.<sup>514</sup> A typical war bond drive

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<sup>513</sup>OWI: RG 208, Domestic Radio Bureau, Office of the Deputy Chief; SG 169, "Fact Sheet No. 324, Seventh Loan Drive," 14 May 1945, WNRC.

<sup>514</sup>Ibid.; "U.S. Popular Music Collection, 1941-1945," Library of Congress.



song, "Lend 'Til It Hurts," was not only performed on radio but it was also distributed free to schools to be used in conjunction with savings stamps promotions:

To wage this war and get it won  
Needs America's every daughter and son,  
At the front, on the farm, on the factory run,  
Or as the man behind the man behind the gun:  
Oh, lend 'til it hurts the Axis;  
Stand back of the boys who fight.  
When you spend a dime  
Ask ev'ry time  
If the boys in the fight  
Would say you were right.  
Help bring all our boys back sooner  
To a peace worth fighting for.  
We're all in it;  
Let's win it.  
Lend 'til we win this war.<sup>515</sup>

Another suggestion from the Treasury Department and the OWI for songwriters encouraged looking to the post-war world. Songs should stress the theme of financial security, in the form of bonds to be used in the future for education, home repairs or replacement, and for retirement. There was also the theme of buying bonds as a hedge against inflation in the post-war world when the government feared that prices for consumer goods would rise before the

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<sup>515</sup>Tom Adair and Dick Uhl, "Lend 'Til It Hurts the Axis," (Education Section, War Savings Staff, U.S. Treasury Department, Washington, D.C., 1942).

economy could convert to a peacetime one. Encouraging Americans to put more of their excess cash into war bonds would stall inflation since there would be less ready money for people to spend. Americans were to be encouraged to put "every penny over rock bottom expenses into the purchase of more war bonds." They were lending their money to the government at a "good rate of interest." Tin Pan Alley answered the call of the Treasury Department in the spring of 1945 with: "Ten Years from Now," by Whitney and Kramer; "I Don't Want to Change the Subject," by Brown and Henderson; "Lullaby of the Baby," by Hy Zaret (a lullaby about the great future in store because parents bought bonds); "Sergeant Housewife," by Joe Meyer and Dorothy Fields (detailing women's roles and their ability to juggle household expenses to purchase more bonds); "Till the Last Beat of the Drum," by Fred Ahlert; "You Can't Be Here, I Can't Be There," by Otto Harbach and Peter DeRose (lovers who can't be together but can purchase bonds together so they will be reunited sooner); "Oh, What a Day That Will Be," by Irving Caesar, "Back Home for Keeps," by Robert Russell; "The Most Important Job," by Frank Loesser; "The Kid with the Whiskers," by George Myer, and

"Hep, Pop," by Harold Rome.<sup>516</sup> As usual these war bond drive songs made little or no progress on the popular music hit charts. But these particular songs were written with a specific purpose in mind: to impress on Americans the importance of purchasing war bonds. At best, Tin Pan Alley would be able to send the message in such a manner that the radio listening public would be entertained and not switch stations on their radios. A bored public might not stay with a radio program long enough to be persuaded to buy bonds. Popular music and famous entertainers were therefore as important to the war bond drives as the free air time donated by radio networks to broadcast the shows.

Other than the temporarily successful war bond drive songs, popular music was still in arrears when it came to war song production. By 1943, the press had noticed the failure as well. In a column entitled "Tin Pan Alley Seeks the Song" in the New York Times Magazine, 6 June 1943, John Desmond asked why the Tin Pan Alley that had produced two wildly popular songs (selling over a million copies of sheet music), "Over There" from World War I and

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<sup>516</sup>"U.S. Popular Music Collection, 1941-1945," Library of Congress; OWI: RG 208, Domestic Radio Bureau, Office of the Deputy Chief; SG 169, "Fact Sheet No. 324, Seventh Loan Drive," 14 May 1945, WNRC.

"Hot Time in the Old Town Tonight" from the Spanish-American War, could not write the Great American War Song again.<sup>517</sup>

Desmond believed there were a number of reasons why there had been no hit war song. For one thing, he agreed with other critics that the music industry had changed since WWI. The old method of spreading a song across the nation, through sheet-music and phonograph sales, had been able to keep a song popular for as long as two years. A hit in World War I sold 500,000 copies; "Over There" sold two million, and "It's a Long Way to Tipperary" sold six million. In the Second World War, a "smash" hit lasted from ten to twelve weeks before it was played to its death on the radio and by dance bands, and a song that sold over 250,000 copies of sheet music and 50,000 to 100,000 records was considered highly successful. By the end of the war, sheet music sales of 1,000,000 copies were common and with the end of shellac rationing, smash hit record sales jumped to 500,000-850,000.<sup>518</sup>

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<sup>517</sup>John Desmond, "Tin Pan Alley Seeks the Song,"The New York Times Magazine, 6 June 1943: 14, 31; Chappell & Co., Inc., 80 Years of American Songs Hits, 1892-1972: A Comprehensive Yearly Reference Book Listing America's Major Hit Songs and Their Writers, (New York: Chappell & Co., Inc., 1973), 5, 10;

<sup>518</sup>Ibid.; "Decca 'Rum & Coke' Disc May Be Co's Biggest Seller Despite Net Ban, Variety, 14 February 1945, vol, 157, no. 10: 43.

Desmond also pointed out that it was much more expensive to get a song "started on the road to success" than in the past. Advertising to put a song before the public cost between \$10,000 and \$25,000 per song. It was easy to understand why song publishers would rather invest their capital in songs they knew would make money: reasonably good, sophisticated love songs.<sup>519</sup>

Desmond reported (accurately) that everyone in the music industry blamed someone else for the lack of a hit war song. Songwriters claimed they had the song but could not get it published. Publishers denied this and referred to several war songs they had backed with unsuccessful results. The publishers blamed the orchestras and dance bands for failing to play the songs, or they blamed the American Federation of Musicians' ban on recording new music (an issue eventually resolved with the recording companies). The bands blamed the public, saying that if the people asked for war songs they would play them, but the public wanted dance tunes, not march tunes. Desmond said there was the perception, or a stubborn refusal to think otherwise, that a "proper" war song had to be in march tempo. In his estimation all of these excuses actually pointed in one direction--the American public's refusal to accept

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<sup>519</sup>ibid.

war songs in the same form as Tin Pan Alley was submitting them for the public's approval.<sup>520</sup>

It was true that the public would not buy war songs. Olin Downes, music critic of the New York Times, suggested that war news was so censored and so meager (necessarily, he said) that by the time it reached the public and the composers in Tin Pan Alley, "It had been shorn of its drama and is 'cold'." Evidently, "cold" war news was not enough to stimulate the imagination of songwriters. E.C. Mills, former chairman of ASCAP, wrote, "I don't think the emotions of the country have been roused. I've had twenty years' intimate relations with those fellows [meaning songwriters] and I know how they respond."<sup>521</sup> It is difficult to believe that this statement--that Americans were not sufficiently aroused by the Japanese attack--could go unchallenged in August 1942, eight months after Pearl Harbor. But apparently, at the time, it did. The government's policy of suppressing all photographs of dead soldiers and shell-shocked GIs, or allowing radio to air pre-recorded news broadcasts from the battlefields (these would be without passing

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<sup>520</sup>ibid.

<sup>521</sup>Olin Downes, "Music of the Times: The Need for Great War Songs," The New York Times, 23 Aug. 1942, 8: 5.

through the government's filter) was in response to the fear that American military setbacks in 1942 would demoralize the public. At this time, most American did not know the full extent of the horrors American soldiers were facing, so why should the musicians of Tin Pan Alley be any different?

The Great American War Song, according to Downes, might have been the victim of the "unhappy difference existing between the state of mind of the nation in the last war and its consciousness of the present day." World War II's generation had to fight to overcome the "tragic misrepresentation" of the First World War. The outlook of soldiers going into battle in the Second World War differed from that of soldiers of 1918 when war had not yet lost its glory, and men thought they were fighting a war to end all wars. Downes blamed the "betrayal of our faith," [the disillusionment of many Americans following World War I] by men he called "self-interested demagogues, unscrupulous politicians, and tools of special interests," who had betrayed the peace and left surviving American soldiers with the "bitter . . . truth." The youth of America had died for "party politics and hypocrites and stuffed shirts at home." As a result, America had to convince young men that there were "good things worth fighting for," and that America was something other than "the noxious swarm that poisoned the thought

of the whole nation after 1918." Downes said that American had to persuade its young men that the United States was truly fighting for "right and the four freedoms" and would not stop until "we have fulfilled our obligations as men and as a nation in the forging of a better world." It was not solely triumphing in a war that concerned Downes; it was also winning back the faith of young American men. His conclusion was that if men had faith, they sang. It then followed that Americans had no war song because they lacked faith and music could not fabricate this for them. Only when there was a renewal of faith "born of crisis and need" might a "reality of feeling" do something in the "course of events for American music."<sup>522</sup>

Downes had a point when he cited the disillusionment following the Treaty of Versailles as a possible explanation for the lack of a rousing war song in World War II. Americans were more jaded by 1940. They had lived through the "war to end all wars," and the restless, returning doughboys added to the colorful, sensational years of the twenties. The decade saw widespread disregard of the national law prohibiting the sale of alcohol, the birth of the speakeasy, the bootlegger, the flapper, the high-speed automobile,

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<sup>522</sup>*ibid.*



short skirts and bobbed hair on women, uninhibited literature, wide open gambling, race riots, the Red Scare, Sunday sports, dance crazes, the introduction of jazz to musical America, movie madness, psychoanalysis, the manipulation of credit, "Lucky Lindy," the Monkey Trial, and the growth of organized crime. The twenties signaled a break from the old Victorian ways and a new attitude of looking forward to change. The sophisticated thirties (as seen through the songs of Cole Porter and George and Ira Gershwin, the plays and music of Noel Coward and Ben Hecht, the writing of Robert Benchley and the Algonquin Round Table, and the Hollywood screw-ball comedies such as Bringing Up Baby, The Philadelphia Story, and His Girl Friday) were one layer of the years of the Depression, which concluded with the outrage of the Nazi onslaughts. War could no longer be glorified with jingoistic slogans or softened with sentimentality. The younger generation was cynical, and their elders were disillusioned by the fact that their sacrifices had not brought about the new world they had fought for. But these facts did not keep American men from over-running recruiting offices and offering themselves to help defeat the Axis.

Thoughtful Americans might have held Tin Pan Alley and, in particular, George M. Cohan, partially responsible for the

enthusiasm whipped up for the Great War by march-like war songs. If "Over There" was as powerful a war song as the World War II generation seemed to think, then it is reasonable to deduce that a song of the same style and emotional power might have had a difficult time in gaining popularity slightly more than twenty years later. But, the Americans of the World War II era were more worldly than the previous generation. They were embarrassed by shows of overt patriotism. For example, Kate Smith's performances of patriotic music earned her weekly radio show, The Kate Smith Hour, top ratings, but in the training camps or on military bases, The Billboard said, "The 'flag waving' hurt," since "the boys like to do their own" and any mention of a show or song with a "patriotic slant" apparently "chase[d]s the trainees at camps far, far away."<sup>523</sup> Some were even insulted by the notion that a soldier would not fight without a stirring song. Others resented being told what types of music they could and could not listen to. A soldier wrote Variety complaining that "slush tunes" had been banned from the Stage Door Canteen: "I see that . . . banned tunes such as 'Dear Mom,' 'White Cliffs of Dover,' 'Miss You,' and 'My Buddy' on grounds they make the poor little soldier boy homesick and

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<sup>523</sup>"G.I.'s Tab Musical Favorites; Crosby, James, Shore Rated," The Billboard, 16 Sept. 1944, vol. 56, no. 38: 19.

miserable." He says the soldiers like these tunes enough to "drop a nickel in the slot and play them all night long."<sup>524</sup> It was apparent soldiers did not want their choice in music decided for them. Those asking for war songs for the Second World War were not the young men who were fighting the battles; it was the older generation who feared that unless there was an all-encompassing war song, American soldiers would not be inspired to fight, and that without a war song the homefront would not rally behind the war effort. Very few articles in Variety or Billboard stated that soldiers wanted war songs. The exception was an editorial reprinted in Variety from The Holabird Exhaust, Holabird Quartermaster Motor Base, Maryland, in which the call for a forceful war song was issued by the editorial staff:

We're fed up definitely and thoroughly with these cute little plaintive songs. What we want are battle songs. Don't tell us there'll be bluebirds over the white cliffs of Dover. To hell with the bluebirds. Tell us there'll be vultures over Berchtesgaden.<sup>525</sup>

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<sup>524</sup>"'Slush Tunes,' Nonetheless, Get Best Play in Camp Jukeboxes, Says Soldier," Variety, 2 September 1942, vol. 147, no. 13: 2, 50.

<sup>525</sup>"Public Seems Blah to 'Wrath' Songs Pubs See OWI Hopes Scuttled by Facts," Variety, 14 October 1942, vol. 148, no.6: 42.

A poem by Captain Tom Payne claimed that servicemen wanted Tin Pan Alley to "Give us a song we can fight to," so they could "forget about the bluebirds over Dover," or wearing "a pair of silver wings" because "Johnny Doughboy's not there for fun." Payne claimed servicemen wanted songs that spoke of "things the enemy fears," like tanks and "big ships, torpedo boats, and subs." The poem concludes:

But a war is tough and it's mean--  
Give us a song we can fight to.<sup>526</sup>

Irving Berlin strongly disagreed with Payne's sentiment. Returning from an eleven week tour in London with This Is the Army, he said, "The American G.I. is getting the war songs he wants--something sentimental about home and love. He prefers this to the more martial tunes of the last war." Part of Berlin's theory for the lack of a martial war song was based on the American tradition of the "citizen-soldier": "After all, a war song is only a song popular during war, and who are these soldiers? They're just civilians in uniform." Since the songs most popular with civilians were love songs, it would logically follow that "the

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<sup>526</sup>Tom Payne, "Give Us a Song We Can Fight To," Reveille: War Poems by Members of Our Armed Forces, selected by Daniel Henderson, John Kieran, and Grantland Rice, (New York: A.S. Barnes and Company, 1943), 93-94.

so-called sloppy, sentimental songs that are being sung reflect what the boys feel." And Berlin adds, "The boys like sentimental songs. They definitely do not like bragging, flag-waving songs."<sup>527</sup>

As Chapter 5 will show, the majority of soldiers polled preferred dance tunes, and they wanted to hear them from juke boxes, not military bands. The soldiers wanted the music they had left behind no matter where in the world they were stationed. And fears that the homefront would not back America's armed forces without a song to bind the two together were unfounded. Civilians of all ages, races, and social classes contributed more to winning World War II than to any previous conflict. So many people volunteered to participate in civil defense programs, scrap drives, bond drives, and war-related activities that in many cases, the local, as well as the national, government was overwhelmed. The lack of a war song did not dampen the enthusiasm as the country closed ranks against Germany and Japan.<sup>528</sup>

There are other explanations for the scarcity of war songs. One of the most plausible is that music had become so sophisticated in

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<sup>527</sup>"GI's Want Sentimental Numbers, Says Berlin; 'Marizy' Floors Him," Variety, 8 March 1944, vol. 153, no. 13: 44.

<sup>528</sup>Casdorff, Let the Good Times Roll, passim; O'Neill, A Democracy at War, 129-143.

melody and rhythm that the music industry gradually became insulated from the true mood of the American people. Swing had, through the war years, become too complicated and "difficult to dance to!" As smaller jazz combos began to influence the style and rhythms of the dance bands, there was often a cross-over of musical styles and musicians who sometimes forgot the audience and played to showcase their own improvisational abilities.<sup>529</sup>

Jazz had become a cult for many intellectuals and rebellious teenagers.<sup>530</sup> Often the improvisational style became rhythmically impossible to dance to, and people who had once stopped dancing only to gather around a stage and cheer a soloist now stopped dancing completely. The tempos of the songs were either too fast or too slow for dancing, but there were many jitterbugs who made it a matter of pride and skill to be able to keep up with the fastest tempos of the swing bands. According to one dancer, "The bands seemed to be swinging faster every night

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<sup>529</sup>R. Serge Denisoff & Richard A. Peterson, eds., The Sounds of Social Change: Studies in Popular Culture, (Chicago: Rand McNalley & Co., 1972) 20.

<sup>530</sup>H.F. Mooney, "Popular Music Since the 1920's: The Significance of Shifting Taste," in R. Serge Denisoff and Richard Peterson, eds., The Sounds of Social Change: Studies in Popular Culture, (Chicago: Rand McNally & Co., 1972), 189.

and all the best dancers could follow them in new and different ways."<sup>531</sup> But these dancers were the exceptions. Not every jitterbug had the skills to keep up with the speeded up tempos, and eventually, the majority of the dancers would fall behind and leave the dance floor. The once infrequent solo improvisations of swing band musicians had become standard by the end of the 1940s. Jazz had grown so esoteric that it left most of its listeners behind. David W. Stowe says in Swing Changes: Big Band Jazz in New Deal America that as early as 1940 swing music had begun to change the "cultural status of jazz" from the dance excesses of the jitterbugs into a form more closely associated with "art" music. The jitterbugs stopped dancing in order to listen (or because they did not find the rhythms danceable), and this freed the musicians and arrangers, according to Benny Goodman, to "create more musically inventive arrangements and musicians to engage in more creative expressive improvisation."<sup>532</sup> Whatever the reason was for the decline in dancing, one thing was certain: swing music was not conducive to war songs in the traditional sense, and apparently the

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<sup>531</sup>Marshall Stearns and Jean Stearns, Jazz Dance: The Story of American Vernacular Dance, (New York: Macmillan, 1968), 323.

<sup>532</sup>David W. Stowe, Swing Changes: Big Band Jazz in New Deal America, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1994), 40.

American public was not willing to accept war songs in the traditional form: standard two or four beat measured tempos.

John Desmond's column generated numerous comments, including one from retired U.S. Navy officer, Edward Price Ehrich, who thought that Desmond had omitted the one real reason there had been no war song: "This is not a singing war." In Ehrich's view World War II was "a very grim war--grimmer than the last one." In Ehrich's opinion, World War II was not a war where Americans stepped in [alluding to the U.S.'s late entry into WWI] "at the last minute to finish a job already well along." He said this was a war in which millions of Americans worked long hours in factories, bought war bonds, paid high taxes, and sent their sons and daughters to fight. Americans "are on the threshold of a frightening fight for survival--and they know it." Ehrich declared that the type of enemy with which Americans were faced-- "fighting men who could do what they did to Pearl Harbor . . . men who carry out bayonet practice against Chinese prisoners . . . or Japanese nurses who hurl grenades at the backs of your troops"--these were not things that made the soldier sing as he went into battle. Maybe American soldiers did not feel like singing--except about their outfit, their loneliness, or their girl friends. According to Ehrich, "They have nothing to sing about with regard to the



war."<sup>533</sup> The song titles on the best seller lists confirm Ehrich's statement. American soldiers were not singing about the war, but they did sing about their loneliness and their girl friends. Confirming this trend, "15 Best Song Sellers" for the week ending 12 June 1943 included these romantic ballads: "You'll Never Know (Just How Much I Love You)," and "As Time Goes By," plus these songs of loneliness and parted lovers: "Don't Get Around Much Anymore," and "Wait for Me Mary."<sup>534</sup>

Lieutenant Ehrich's letter is important: it was the first mention in the press of the realities of war in connection with Tin Pan Alley's efforts to write the Great American War Song. Until this letter was published in June 1943, there was little discussion of the horrors of war in the music industry trade papers and certainly no mention of killing or death in the songs. The government was always concerned that the public's morale would be affected if the truth about battlefield conditions were known. As a result the news media continued the government's policy, identical to that of World War I, of not showing photographs or

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<sup>533</sup>"This Is Not a Singing War," The New York Times Magazine, 20 June 1943: 23.

<sup>534</sup>"15 Best Song Sellers," Variety, 16 June 1943, vol. 151, no. 13: 41.

news film of dead American soldiers. It was, however, perfectly acceptable to publish pictures of dead enemy soldiers or even Allied war dead. This policy was in effect until mid-1943, when the OWI and the War Department reversed themselves and allowed wounded, dying, and dead American soldiers to be shown in published photos. Photos under the new policy were restrained. All identifying insignia were removed from the pictures, photos were cropped to remove soldiers' faces, and no mangled or dismembered bodies were shown. It was hoped these photos would spur homefront Americans to do more for the war effort. The government believed that most Americans had little concept of the war. And the OWI hoped to shock Americans out of what it perceived as public complacency. Despite the new guidelines, the war pictured in the sanitized photos in Life, Look, Newsweek, and other news publications was far different from what most Americans imagined. It was "grim."<sup>535</sup>

Beginning in the fall of 1943, the government used photos of dead Americans in advertisements for its Third War Loan drive and public reaction was positive. An OWI survey of New York war plant

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<sup>535</sup>Susan Moeller, Shooting War: Photography and the American Experience of Combat, (New York: Basic Books, Inc., Publishers, 1989), 204-206.

workers showed seventy-five percent believed that photographs of dead Americans on posters would help sell more war bonds. And few thought the subject matter "too gruesome." In fact, the OWI found that the only messages able to reach war-saturated Americans were those pictures of American war dead that "make the people so mad they dig down deep."<sup>536</sup> But this new policy of openness did not affect Tin Pan Alley and the search for the Great American War Song. There was little change in the type of songs produced or the message or subject of those that made it onto the best seller lists. Love and romance were the continuing interest of popular music consumers.

In conjunction with the censoring of newsreel footage and still photographs in the first two years of the war, the OWI cautioned writers and composers, along with radio broadcasters, to "avoid dramatic programs or music that attempt[ed] to portray the horrors of war." Sounds that simulated or might be mistaken for air raid alarms and sirens were forbidden. The OWI reminded writers that "war is not pretty. There's no point in rubbing it in or bathing in blood baths or having seamen fried in oil." The people on the homefront could imagine the war and its terrible possibilities

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<sup>536</sup>OWI: RG 208; "Surveys of Public Attitudes," 4 November 1943: SG 118, WNRC.

without show business adding to the strain. The OWI seemed especially concerned that the "womenfolks" not be upset by maudlin or frightening songs, as they can "picture all too vividly the horrors that may befall their men without hearing . . . the possibilities in primary colors." Horror, in OWI's opinion, was unnecessarily harmful. The OWI was afraid listeners would associate a song of dying and death with someone "who is dear to them who may be serving under hazardous circumstances . . . it [a song] was not escapism but realism--something that's really happening in this war."<sup>537</sup> This was neither escapist nor entertaining, two of the primary aims (along with rousing a martial spirit in Americans) of the music business in the war.

The theory that the "grimness" of the war prevented any war songs from achieving popularity soon gave way to other excuses. Pundits excused the lack of a war song, that would appeal to both soldier and civilian alike, by pointing out that America's soldiers were spread over the globe and whoever composed a war song must cover the whole earth--a job that could not be done by order or prescription. If the song comes at all, wrote John Lardner in a Newsweek column, "Lardner Goes to War," 24 August 1943, it would

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<sup>537</sup>OWI: RG 208; "When Radio Writes for War," Domestic Radio Bureau: SG 169, WNRC.

"come of its own accord, and no one can guess what sort of song it will be. It cannot be built to order." The war-song situation was beyond the control of the composers and the propagandists, he concluded, despite his belief that "no war is complete or respectable without a song or songs to represent it."<sup>538</sup>

The idea that the "grim seriousness" of the war precluded much singing about it on the part of soldiers was echoed in an article by Gustav Klemm, "The Fighting Man and His Music," published in the November 1943 issue of Etude. Klemm stated that American soldiers were so busy beating back the enemy that they had no time for singing. In addition, music was being provided for them in the form of portable entertainment centers--combined radio and phonograph sets--sent to soldiers overseas. Soldiers also had their own portable radios or access to them in the camp auditorium. Furthermore, concerts and other musical attractions in the camps helped to explain why soldiers did not sing much and had not singled out a particular song as the great martial song of World War II.<sup>539</sup>

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<sup>538</sup>John Lardner, "Lardner's Goes to War," Newsweek, 24 Aug. 1943: 24.

<sup>539</sup>Gustav Klemm, "The Fighting Man and His Music," The Etude, Nov. 1943, vol. 61: 711, 755.

Despite their many failures and the apparent indifference of the American soldier and American public, Tin Pan Alley and the Music War Committee of the American Theater Wing continued to push for war songs. Oscar Hammerstein II reminded the music industry that "the important point about a war song is that there is no virtue in its high purpose or patriotic intent. To justify itself it must stand on its own two feet as a really good song." The Music War Committee was trying to start a new cycle of war songs on a more positive note. It began the search for good songs with morale-building value by selecting forty-three songs as worthy of its recommendation. The choices varied, according to Hammerstein, "from cantata to outright corn, and the Committee is constantly reexamining them to discover whether the changing patterns of life in wartime have lessened the applicability or usefulness of any of them."<sup>540</sup>

Besides finding the Great American War Song, the Music War Committee took upon itself the job of analyzing the outpouring of war songs its contests and calls for songs produced. Its study of patriotic philosophy contained in war songs uncovered unsuspected complications. It would not be enough to find a song related to the

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<sup>540</sup>Oscar Hammerstein II, "War Songs," Variety Anniversary Thirty-eighth Anniversary Issue, 5 Jan. 1944, vol. 153, no. 4: 187.

war that was popular; the Music War Committee thought it could decide whether a particular song should be popular. "We must refrain from putting our stamp of approval on songs that might in anyway [sic] encourage complacency, disunity, or wishful thinking about how near we are to the end of the war."<sup>541</sup> This sentiment certainly echoes the directives of the Office of War Information that discouraged songs written about the post-war world, along with love songs and songs that might divide the country by class, racial, or geographic lines. War songs also needed to present America's democratic ideology. The country could not be pictured as boastful, militaristic, or egocentric. The nation should be presented as a place where all people were free to decide their own fates, the traditional land of opportunity. The United States was a country in which the poorest boy could grow up to be president or at the very least be a success in his chosen field, if he worked hard enough and was willing to make sacrifices. And finally, Americans should be represented in war songs as a people reluctant to fight but willing to do what was necessary to preserve their freedom.

The attempt by the OWI and the Music War Committee to solve the problem--that of getting "correct" war songs--failed. Abel

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<sup>541</sup> Ibid.

Green put it succinctly, saying, "Fact is nobody yet has been able to lead the nation to the musical trough and make 'em drink. . . . You can pound high-powered songplugging at 'em . . . but what they'll accept, one never knows till the songs move off the rack." Irving Berlin was also correct when he wrote Variety, in answer to the Music War Committee's idea of a songwriting contest, that nobody had yet "cooked up a song hit via a contest."<sup>542</sup> The Pittsburgh Press finally suggested that it might be a good thing, "if everyone would stop hunting for the perfect war song. They've got the boys in Tin Pan Alley pressing, and in Tin Pan Alley that's not good."<sup>543</sup> It seemed as if the nation's master songwriters could not perform under pressure or maybe they were asked to do the impossible. As Green noted in Variety's 37th Anniversary Issue, 6 January 1943, "You can lead American ears to the microphone or jukebox, but you can't make 'em like it or buy it."<sup>544</sup>

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<sup>542</sup>Abel Green, "War Song of World War II Taking Care of Itself," Variety Thirty-eighth Anniversary Issue, 5 Jan. 1944, vol. 153, no. 4: 187.

<sup>543</sup>quoted in "Music in the News," The Billboard, 18 Sept. 1943, vol. 55, no. 38: 64.

<sup>544</sup>"Music Biz Still Hunting That Boff War Song," Variety 37th Anniversary Issue, 6 January 1943, vol. 149, no. 4: 187.



The drive for "correct" songs, even for use by servicemen, also failed. The Army's Hit Kit was a flop. Printed in pocket-sized folders for soldiers to carry with them, the Hit Kits included at least one "oldie" and one patriotic song. They were published once a month and distributed around the globe. By the time soldiers in the field received the Hit Kit, it was usually several months old, and many of the songs had lost their popularity. The Hit Kit could not compete with live and short-wave radio broadcasts that allowed the men to hear the latest songs broadcast on Your Hit Parade. After twelve months the Army decided on 22 July 1944, to abandon the Hit Kit and concede to the soldiers' musical choices. In a nationwide poll of training camps both in the U.S. and overseas, G.I.s voted the Hit Kit as one of their seven least favorite periodicals. They would rather spend their money on commercial lyrics magazines such as Broadcast Songs, Hit Parade, or Song Hits than receive the free Hit Kits.<sup>545</sup> Evidently, American G.I.s did not want all of their decisions made for them. If a song was popular, it was because the soldiers decided so for themselves, and not because some committee told them which songs to sing.

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<sup>545</sup>"G.I.'s Hit 'Hit Kit': Prefer Nickel and Dime Lyric Mags," The Billboard, 29 July 1944, vol. 56, no. 31: 21.

Eventually, Tin Pan Alley began to promote the idea that the war song of World War II would appear with or without government aid or committees of composers and publishers. The American public would decide which songs it preferred and from those would come the "War Song." Music publishers admitted they were baffled by the public's indifferent response to martial songs. The popularity of nonsense songs, such as "Mairzy Doats" (which became the number one sheet music seller in less than three weeks with sales of over 450,000), proved what music publishers had been saying all along: "The song-buying public gets enough of the big conflict in newspapers, magazines, and on the air, and that escapist material is preferred in musical form."<sup>546</sup> A few critics spoke out against the song, fearing that its popularity was a comment about the mentality of the Americans who were singing and humming the tune.<sup>547</sup> Its words were said to have been inspired by the one of the songwriters' daughters. Apparently, he overheard his child talking to her dolls and saying something that sounded like, "marzie

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<sup>546</sup>"Public Prefers Novelties to War Songs, Publishers Figure; Cite Escape Need," Variety, 2 Feb. 1944, vol. 153, no. 8: 1,46.

<sup>547</sup>"Marizy Day Too," Newsweek, 23 (7 Feb. 1944), 97.

tweet an' cowzie tweet and liddle harskey doysters." This was then worked in to a bouncy song:

Marizy doats and dozy doats and liddle lamzy divey  
 A kiddley divey too, wouldn't you? Yes!  
 Marizy doats and dozy doats and liddle lamzy divey  
 A kiddley divey too, wouldn't you?  
 If the words sound queer and funny to your ear  
 A little bit jumbled and jivey  
 Sing mares eat oats and does eat oats  
 And little lambs eat ivy. Oh,  
 Marizy doats and dozy doats and liddle lamzy divey  
 A kiddley divey too, wouldn't you?  
 A kiddley divey too, wouldn't you?<sup>548</sup>

The best-selling songs of February 1944 testify to the fact that the American public still was not interested in war songs. Of the top fifteen tunes, only two had any connections with the war. One was "Vict'ry Polka," a best selling recording by Bing Crosby and the Andrews Sisters, with lyrics that proclaimed in polka style:

There's gonna be a hallelujah day,  
 When the boys have all come home to stay.  
 And a million bands begin to play,  
 We'll be dancing the Vict'ry Polka.  
 And when we've lit the torch of liberty,  
 In each blacked-out land across the sea.  
 When a man can proudly say I'm free,  
 We'll be dancing the Vict'ry Polka.  
 And we will give a mighty cheer,  
 When a ration book is just a souvenir.

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<sup>548</sup>Milton Drake, Al Hoffman, and Jerry Livingston, "Marizy Doats," (New York: Miller Music Corp., 1943).

And we'll heave a mighty sigh,  
 When each gal can kiss the boy she kissed goodbye.  
 And they'll come marching down 5th Avenue,  
 The United Nations in review.  
 When this lovely dream has all come true,  
 We'll be dancing the Victc'ry Polka.<sup>549</sup>

The "dream" aspect of "Vic'try Polka" cannot have pleased the OWI, but the lyrics did mention war aims: freedom "across the sea," and a victorious "United Nations" on parade. Of the fifty melodies on the most-played list from the broadcast networks, only Jimmy McHugh's "Say a Prayer for the Boys Over There" actually mentioned the war in terms of battle and the fact that soldiers were in danger:

Say a pray'r for the boys over there  
 And tomorrow's sky will be brighter  
 Bless them all as they valiantly fight  
 And let your faith be their guiding star tonight  
 Kneel and pray and there'll soon come a day  
 When the hearts of men will be lighter  
 For the sake of freedom everywhere  
 Say a pray'r for the boys over there.<sup>550</sup>

Music publishers were beginning to think that World War II would never produce a war song comparable to those of World War I.

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<sup>549</sup>Samuel Cahn and Jule Styne, "Vict'ry Polka," (New York: Chappell & Co., Inc, 1943).

<sup>550</sup>Jimmy McHugh and Herb Magidson, "Say a Pray'r for the Boys Over There," (New York: Southern Music Publishing Co., Inc., 1943).

Some publishers even claimed that if "Praise the Lord and Pass the Ammunition" had been published in early 1944, it would not have gotten more than "passing attention."<sup>551</sup>

The people who listened to juke boxes in the weeks following the D-Day invasion of Normandy, beginning on 6 June 1944, did not register their opinions about the conduct of the war by song selection or by an increase in popular music sales as it did following other military successes (for example, Midway in 1942 and the surrender of Italy in 1943). "The Bells of Normandy" by Don Reid and Irving Miller did not sell despite a large advertising campaign by Dorsey Brothers Music, Inc. It seemed that Americans did not care to sing that: "The Bells of Normandy are ringing again/And hearts of Normandy are singing again."<sup>552</sup> The ten most popular songs had tenuous connections, if any, with events in either the Europe or the Pacific. A listing of the "10 Best Sellers on Coin-Machines" in Variety for the week of 21 June 1944, included: "I'll Get By," "I'll Be Seeing You," "Long Ago and Far Away," "San Fernando Valley," "I Love You," "Amor," "Goodnight Wherever You Are," and

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<sup>551</sup>"Public Prefers Novelties to War Songs, Publishers Figure; Cite Escape Need," Variety, 2 Feb. 1944, vol. 153, no. 8: 1,46.

<sup>552</sup>Don Reid and Irving Miller, "The Bells of Normandy (Are Ringing Again)," (New York: Dorsey Brothers Music, Inc., 1944).

"Straighten Up and Fly Right." Only two songs had any connection with the war: "G.I. Jive" and "Milkman Keep Those Bottles Quiet."<sup>553</sup> Both of the latter songs were based on current slang and neither could seriously be considered "proper" war songs:

Milkman, keep those bottles quiet.  
 Can't use that jive on my milk diet.  
 Been workin' on the swing shift all night,  
 Turnin' out my quota, all right.  
 Now I'm beat right down to the sod,  
 And I got to dig myself some nod.  
 The noise of the riveter,  
 I don't mind it.  
 'Cause the man with the whiskers,  
 Got a lot behind him.  
 Now I can't keep a punchin'  
 With that Victory Crew,  
 When you make me punchy  
 With that bottle moo.  
 I gotta give my all,  
 If I'm going to give it.  
 And I gotta get some shut-eye  
 If I'm goin' to rivet.  
 So, bail out Bud,  
 With that big barrage,  
 It's unpatriotic; it's sabotage.  
 Milkman stop that Grade-A riot,  
 Cut out if you can't lullaby-it.  
 Been truckin' on a fat tank all day,  
 Workin' on a bomber OK.  
 Well, you blast my wig with those clinks,  
 I got to get my forty winks.

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<sup>553</sup>"10 Best Sellers on Coin-Machines," Variety, 21 June 1944, vol. 155, no. 2: 46.

Milkman keep those bottles quiet.  
Milkman keep those bottles quiet.<sup>554</sup>

In the absence of hit war songs, music publishers turned to V-E Day songs. As early as October 1944, it was reported that music publishers were lining up songs to mark the celebrations that would occur when U.S. troops returned home. At least four Tin Pan Alley publishing houses had numbers using the back-home-again theme: "When My GI Guy Comes Marching Home," by Henry Nemo; "Wish You Were Waiting For Me," and "Pretty Soon," by Bobby Worth, and "When He Comes Home," by Frank Loesser.<sup>555</sup>

In view of the official government policy frowning on any premature celebration that might build undue optimism and lead to a drop in the war effort, there was a difference of opinion among publishers as to whether the "welcome-home" songs should be published. Leeds Music decided to withhold release of "When My GI Guy Comes Marching Home," until the situation really called for it. Other publishers said that the songs reflected actual public sentiment, and they were going to publish and release these

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<sup>554</sup>Don Raye and Gene DePaul, "Milkman , Keep Those Bottles Quiet," (New York: Leo Feist, Inc., 1944).

<sup>555</sup>"U.S. Popular Music Collection, 1941-1945," Library of Congress.

songs.<sup>556</sup> In August 1944 Campbell-Porgie, Inc. published "Some Peaceful Evening (In Some Peaceful Town)," by Dewey Bergman, Carley Mills, and Ann Roberts. This song spoke of "Some peaceful evening/In some peaceful town/We'll be together again." In the meantime, "It's a Law-aw-aw-aw-aw-aw-ong Way Back Home," by Collins Driggs told how "Step by step/Mile by mile/Tramp,tramp, tramping all the while/ . . . How I long the whole day through/To hit that long, long way back to you."<sup>557</sup> Of all the premature homecoming songs, "When I Get Back to My Home Town," was one of the few actually to mention the war as a cause for separation and also to attempt to spread some war ideology. The verse rationalizes that the separation was necessary in order to preserve "freedom" and the American way of living in "home towns." Fearing reprisals from the MWC and the weakened OWI, publishers of "When I Get Back to My Home Town" printed a disclaimer on the front page of the sheet music noting that the song was "cleared thru NBC,

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<sup>556</sup>"Music Publishers Preparing V-E Day Songs for Fast Marketing," Variety, 11 Oct. 1944, vol. 156, no. 5: 35.

<sup>557</sup>Dewey Bergman, Carley Mills, and Ann Roberts, "Some Peaceful Evening (In Some Peaceful Town)," (New York: Campbell-Porgie, Inc., 1944); Collins Driggs, "Law-aw-aw-aw-aw-aw-ong Way Back Home," (New York: Mills Music, Inc., 1944).



Blue,<sup>558</sup> and CBS Networks," so it appeared to have official sanction, despite the OWI's discouragement of such songs. Released in September 1944, "When I get Back to My Home Town," clearly looked forward to the end of the war:

Johnny got his gun and marched away to war,  
Sent a letter home one day,  
Told the folks he knew what he was fighting for,  
This is what he had to say:  
When I Get Back to My home Town,  
There's gonna be a jubilee.  
And when the boys are homeward bound,  
A hundred million more will feel like me.  
For there'll be music in the air,  
Some one will be waiting there.  
And we'll have freedom everywhere,  
When I Get Back to My Home Town.<sup>559</sup>

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<sup>558</sup>In 1942 an anti-monopoly edict from the FCC ordered RCA to sell or disband one of its two networks. Robert Sarnoff kept the more profitable NBC Red network and reorganized the smaller NBC Blue network into a separate entity. The names Red and Blue derived from the red and blue colored pencils initially used by station engineers to map the station hookup of the NBS system. In 1943 Edward J. Noble bought the Blue chain and renamed it the American Broadcasting Company. Thomas A. DeLong, The Mighty Music Box: The Golden Age of Musical Radio, (New York: Hastings House, 1980), 249.

<sup>559</sup>Lew Berk, "When I Get Back to My Home Town," (New York: Lew Berk, 1944).

Some of the radio networks also questioned the wisdom of playing V-E material before victory in Europe had actually been won. The Blue Network and CBS both decided to stress the theme: "There's still plenty to be done to beat the Nips," so publishers were unsure they would be able to get their V-E numbers played.<sup>560</sup> Still there certainly were exceptions to the broadcasters' decision, as noted by "When I Get Back to My Home Town" and other songs with a homecoming theme: "Make Way for Tomorrow," "Sentimental Journey," and "When the Boys Come Home."

Despite the efforts of the OWI and the Music War Committee, the top tunes of 1944 continued to be those with romantic settings or those that touched on the war indirectly--but had added meaning because of the war. Even revivals of songs more than twenty years old found their way onto the best seller list. Examples include Irving Berlin's "Always," first published in 1925, and an American folk tune, "Buffalo Gals," which was given new lyrics and made Your Hit Parade as "Dance with a Dolly (With a Hole in Her Stocking)." Others on the top seller list for 1944 included: "Don't Fence Me In," "I'll Be Seeing You," "I'll Get By," "I'll Walk Alone," "No Love, No Nothin'" "Paper Doll," "Swingin' on a Star," and once again, "White

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<sup>560</sup>ibid.

Christmas."<sup>561</sup> The Lucky Strike Hit Parade's Top Ten for 1944

included: "I'll Be Seeing You," "Long Ago and Far Away," "I'll Get By,"

"I'll Walk Alone," "Amor," "Swinging on a Star," "I Love You,"

"Besame Mucho," "My Heart Tells Me," and "The Trolley Song."<sup>562</sup>

None of these could be classified as war songs, but they had lyrics that could take on special connotations for wartime listeners.

These songs spoke of love, of separation, and of faithful partners waiting to be reunited in the future. Listeners who were parted from a loved one could easily transfer the songs to fit their situations. The only restriction placed on popular music fans' musical fantasies was their own imagination or lack thereof. This association of lyrics with individual circumstances had the potential to make every song a war song.

Following Victory-in-Europe (V-E) Day, 8 May 1945, there was no holding back the "dream" songs or those that spoke of future plans with loved ones. Americans were just waiting for the time to pass and for their soldiers to return. Although the war in the Pacific was far from over, it would have been difficult to discern

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<sup>561</sup>"Top Tunes of 1944," Variety Thirty-ninth Anniversary Edition, 3 Jan. 1945: 135.

<sup>562</sup>Abel Green, "Music Industry Looks Ahead to Big 1945," Variety Thirty-ninth Anniversary Edition, 3 Jan. 1945: 135.

that fact from a glance at the popular music charts or the advertisements for new songs. Following V-E Day, the "Honor Roll of Hits" as published by The Billboard in its 19 May 1945, issue were: 1) "There I Said It Again," 2) "Sentimental Journey," 3) "Laura," 4) "My Dreams Are Getting Better All the Time," 5) "Just Say a Prayer," 6) "Candy," 7) "Dream," 8) "I'm Beginning to See the Light" 9) "All of My Life," and 10) "Bell-Bottom Trousers."<sup>563</sup>

"Bell-Bottom Trousers," a sailor's chantey of obscure origin, was introduced by bandleader Moe Jaffe--with sanitized lyrics--and for a while its popularity led the music business to believe that "Bell-Bottom Trousers" might be the "Mademoiselle from Armentieres" of World War II. "Bell-Bottom Trousers" was the last song with any military connection to make Your Hit Parade, and technically it fell in the novelty song category (with frivolous lyrics and a rollicking

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<sup>563</sup>"Honor Roll of Hits," The Billboard, 19 May 1945, vol. 57, no. 21: 22; The Billboard claimed its "Honor Roll of Hits" was determined by a "scientific, statistical tabulation" of a song's popularity based on various "Billboard Popularity Charts": "Songs with Most Radio Plugs"; "Records Most Played on Disk Programs"; "Play Status of Films with Leading Songs"; "Best Selling Sheet Music"; "Best Selling Retail Records"; and "Most Played Juke Box Records."

tune that was more conducive to toe-tapping than to marching) and was thus not the martial song for which the OWI had hoped.<sup>564</sup>

When victory did come in the Pacific, the popular music business made little note of the fact. Musical best sellers were the same songs that had been popular for months. They were sentimental ballads and sweet dance tunes--not unlike the same songs that had been popular at the beginning of the war. There were some renewed efforts at homecoming songs. Examples include, "Now the War Is Over," by Jimmie Boswell; "Victory Day," by Roy Angstrom; "Darkness Comes to Light Again," by James Quila; "The Lights Are on Again" and "Victory," both by Hal Chanslor; "You're Coming Home," by Dorothy Campbell; "Back to My Country and You," and "They're Coming Back," both by Ted Clyde; "They're Home Again" and "Veterans on Parade," both by David Hall; and "We've Won the War," by Sister Hanick.<sup>565</sup> Even Irving Berlin responded, sending "Just a Blue Serge Suit" to his publisher on 18 August 1945:

The shooting is over 'cross the foam,  
And Johnny will soon be marching home.  
Johnny has won,  
Laid down his gun.

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<sup>564</sup>"'Bell Bottom Trousers,' Old Sea Chantey, Rings the Bell as a Pop Hit," Variety, 6 June 1945, vol. 158, no. 13: 1, 46.

<sup>565</sup>"U.S. Popular Music Collection 1941-1945," Library of Congress.

What does he ask for,  
Now that his job is done?

Just a blue serge suit,  
And a bright new necktie,  
And a room of his own with a door.  
Just a bed with sheets,  
And a home-cooked dinner,  
That's what he's been fighting for.  
Don't ask questions,  
For he's not talking.  
All he wants to do,  
Is go out walking,  
In a blue serge suit,  
And a peaceful mind,  
With the girl he left behind.<sup>566</sup>

But these songs were the exceptions. Americans wanted to take that "Sentimental Journey" home "On the Atchison, Topeka, and the Santa Fe" to sit on "Saturday Night" with a "Rum and Coca-Cola"; they did not want to "Remember Pearl Harbor" or "Praise the Lord and Pass the Ammunition" any more than they had at the war's beginning. The songs on the hit charts in August 1945 were almost identical in subject and mood (romantic ballads or swing tunes) to those songs that were the leading record sellers of 1941: "I Don't Want to Set the World on Fire," "Green Eyes," "Beat Me Daddy, Eight

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<sup>566</sup>Irving Berlin, "Just a Blue Serge Suit," (New York: Irving Berlin Music Corp., 1945).

to the Bar," "Chattanooga Choo-Choo," "I Guess I'll Have to Dream  
the Rest," and "Along the Santa Fe Trail."<sup>567</sup>

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<sup>567</sup>"Leading Music Box Records of 1941," The Billboard, 31 Jan. 1942, vol. 54, no. 5: 66.





**"GOODBYE, MAMMA. I'M OFF TO YOKOHAMA":  
THE OFFICE OF WAR INFORMATION AND TIN PAN ALLEY IN WORLD  
WAR II  
Volume II**

**A Dissertation**

**Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the  
Louisiana State University and  
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Doctor of Philosophy**

**in**

**The Department of History**

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CHAPTER 4  
"TAKE A TIP FROM SOOZIE CUE--SHE KNOWS WHAT'S HOT AND  
WHAT'S NOT"

When the OWI created the National Wartime Music Committee, allied itself with the American Theater Wing's Music War Council, and called on all Tin Pan Alley songwriters to churn out tough-minded songs that would educate Americans about the realities of war, it hoped for better results than it got. The OWI never understood the function of talent and artistry in popular music production. To the government song composition was a craft; songs were products to be manufactured. It assumed that if Tin Pan Alley tried hard enough and all its components cooperated, it would be possible to write the Great American War Song that would speak to all Americans and rally them behind the war effort. The OWI wanted a war song that would enshrine the necessity of winning the war, through every American's total participation, in the people's hearts.<sup>570</sup> An unrealistic view of the American public hampered the OWI's thinking in regards to what type of song would become *the* war song. The United States was not a country of

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<sup>570</sup>William O'Neill, A Democracy at War: America's Fight at Home and Abroad in World War II, (New York: The Free Press, 1993), 140-141.

assimilated minorities, a contented working class, and small farmers, as might supposed from listening to some of the OWI's radio scripts. According to William O'Neill, "Real Americans had conventional beliefs, few political ideas, and strong prejudices. They were delighted by commercial songs, movies, and radio programs--and the more sentimental, melodramatic, action-oriented, or comic they were, the better."<sup>569</sup> American entertainment of the World War II years (like most American popular culture of any age) was superficial, mass-produced, and commercialized. Any attempts by the government to impose its guidelines on this national enterprise--show business--would have to accept these facts. The OWI thought it understood this, and its unofficial policy of business as usual that allowed the entertainment industry to carry on as before seemed reasonable. But the OWI failed to comprehend the large extent by which the war effort would be defined by "advertisers and merchandisers." It was not prepared to admit that Tin Pan Alley could not be converted from manufacturing love songs to manufacturing war songs just as automobile plants had retooled to assemble planes or tanks. Selling merchandise, in the form of records and sheet music, was

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<sup>569</sup>*Ibid.*, 254.

the first priority of Tin Pan Alley and the OWI never really swayed the music business from this course.

After an encouraging beginning in early 1942, war song production gradually slowed to a trickle. Even contests with monetary awards were unable to elicit a great war song to rally Americans. For example, in Chicago, The Daily Times offered \$1,000 to the winner of its "War Song for America" contest, saying, "America is asking for an inspiring war song. America wants it badly."<sup>570</sup> As if \$1,000 were not reason enough to enter, the contest sponsor asked aspiring composers, "How would you like to achieve undying fame as the writer of 1942's 'Over There'? . . . a stirring song that America would take to its heart . . . that the boys would whistle . . . along the path to victory?"<sup>571</sup> In marketing its contest, The Daily Times suggested the winning song would be played by leading bands, be sung on the radio by renowned entertainers, and a Hollywood motion picture might be built around the tune. "There is no telling the extent of the glory and reward

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<sup>570</sup>"Chicago Times for War Tune," *The Billboard* 6 June 1942, vol. 54, no. 23: 60.

<sup>571</sup>*Ibid.*

that will lie ahead of the winning contestant."<sup>572</sup> The "War Song for America" contest drew over 8,000 entries from amateur and professional songwriters alike, but the winning entry, "Mud in His Ears" by Mac Weaver and Joseph C. Banahan, never received more than a few performances and was quickly forgotten. Still, Weaver and Banahan, the happy winners, declared that The Times contest had rendered a patriotic service and was of "immeasurable value to the morale of the country."<sup>573</sup> Winning the contest surely raised Weaver and Banahan's morale; one used the money to buy a house and the other used his to get married. The Times also explained that each of the winners was purchasing his full quota of war bonds through a payroll deduction plan and therefore felt no obligation to buy bonds with their prize money.

Although the National Wartime Music Committee and the War Music Council made a great show of backing war songs, their titles dropped from the popularity charts after 1943. Bands did not play marching songs, and the new swing band rhythms were not meant

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<sup>572</sup>ibid.

<sup>573</sup>ibid.

for marching.<sup>574</sup> People heard music at home on their radios now, not in theaters or dance halls, and the dominant type of music on the radio was the love song. Polls taken by the networks consistently reported romantic ballads as the first preference of listeners.<sup>575</sup> When a strike by the musicians union, the American Federation of Musicians (AFM), stopped instrumental recording, vocalists were able to step out from the band and become highly visible entertainers in their own right. Thereafter, the popularity of the singer became an important factor in a song's fate. The cult of personality surrounding a musical star was often enough advertisement to boost a song into Your Hit Parade, but even the top male vocalist of the war years, Bing Crosby, could not boost a martial war song onto the charts.

Another factor in the change in the music industry was the ASCAP strike which left the door open for other musicians to enter the music industry. Broadcast Music, Incorporated, was able to compete with ASCAP in the growing fields of swing, folk, blues,

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<sup>574</sup>OWI: RG 208, Domestic Radio Bureau; SG 169, WNRC.

<sup>575</sup>OWI: RG 208, "Surveys of American's Radio Listening Preferences;" SG 119, WNRC.

and country music.<sup>576</sup> Tin Pan Alley no longer controlled the market and, more importantly, the Alley no longer determined public taste in music. People were voting for their favorite songs with their nickels in juke boxes and with their purchases of sheet music and records.

Although ASCAP had begun losing its choke hold on the music industry during the war years, it was far from being counted out in the race for America's entertainment dollar. Tin Pan Alley, like the rest of the entertainment industry, not only survived during World War II but also prospered beyond its wildest imaginings.

At the beginning of the war, the future did not look bright for the music publishing business. Following Pearl Harbor, sheet music sales went into a slump, but then staged a sharp comeback in the weeks after 7 December 1941. Especially profitable were sheet music sales of "The White Cliffs of Dover," "Elmer's Tune," and "Chattanooga Choo-Choo." The only war song with any noticeable sales listing in late January 1942 was "You're a Sap Mr. Jap"--advertised in Variety as "America's Greatest Novelty." There is nothing in the copy of the Variety advertisement to suggest that

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<sup>576</sup>Kenneth Bindas, ed., America's Musical Pulse: Popular Music in Twentieth-Century Society, (Westport, CN: Greenwood Press, 1992), 37.

the country was at war, other than a slogan, "Buy Defense Bonds and Stamps and Lick the Other Side." <sup>577</sup> Record sales, however, never fell seriously; they continued on an upward spiral, most likely due to the Christmas gift-giving season. One tune associated with the war did stand out as a big seller in pre-Pearl Harbor 1941; "The White Cliffs of Dover" sold 43,000 copies as recorded by Sammy Kaye; 42,000 copies as recorded by Kay Kyser; 30,000 copies as recorded by Tommy Tucker; and 9,500 copies as recorded by Kate Smith. As a Variety headline boasted in its 24 December 1941, issue: "Socko Boom in Music Sales Sets In."<sup>578</sup> By February 1942, Variety sensed that Americans were still "jittery" about the war, but they were "getting more accustomed to the situation and instead of staying glued to radios or newspapers [were] apparently breaking out in an amusement rash."<sup>579</sup> In fact all forms of entertainment were booming. In April 1942, the music publishing industry received record-high royalty payments for the business

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<sup>577</sup>Mills Music Advertisement, The Billboard, 31 Jan. 1942, vol. 54, no. 5.

<sup>578</sup>"Socko Boom in Music Sales Sets In," Variety, 24 Dec. 1941, vol. 145. no. 3: 1.

<sup>579</sup>"War Jitters Down, Biz Up," Variety, 11 Feb. 1942, v. 145, no. 10: 5.



quarter ending in February 1942. RCA Victor distributed checks totaling more than \$325,000, representing payments on copyrighted materials used on approximately 11,000,000 recordings. One tune, "Chattanooga Choo Choo," was responsible for royalties of \$35,000 to the publisher, Leo Feist, of the Metro-Robbins group.<sup>580</sup> Dance bands also enjoyed prosperous times at the beginning of the war. Bands were booked for playing engagements throughout 1942, but there was the concern that restrictions on travel, most notably in the form of tire and gasoline rationing, would eventually force the "top outfits [to] hole up in theaters, hotels and major localities."<sup>581</sup> These predictions came true, and by the end of the war, very few dance bands toured the country as they had before the war. Not only rationing but also the draft took its toll on the music industry. Despite the blows the music industry suffered in the opening months of the war--the great reduction in record production, almost insurmountable transportation difficulties, and conscription of musicians--the industry "was in as good a shape as

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<sup>580</sup>"Records Make Big Pay-Off," Variety, 8 April 1942, vol. 146, no. 5: 41.

<sup>581</sup>"Seek Washington Sympathy on Tires for Band, Important in Soldier Diversion; Meantime Biz Is Good," Variety, 8 April 1942, vol. 146, no. 5: 41.

it [had] ever been at this time of year." Summer was normally the best time for dance band bookings, and 1942 was no exception. Agents and location managers all reported that business was "good." They were "cleaned out of open time on major properties and little unfilled time remains on the lesser names between now and August."<sup>582</sup> The number of one-night bookings fell, but those were compensated for by the increase in one and two week engagements. Colleges were a major source of playing dates for dance bands. In 1942 many colleges conducted summer classes for the first time, and dance bands were eager to take advantage of playing opportunities never before available. Charlie Barnet's band was especially eager to play the summer college circuit and would often play one-nighters at schools within easy driving distance of a longer engagement. For example, the band took a side trip to Penn State College from Barnet's month-long job at Atlantic City's Steel Pier. Bands also found employment in military training camps, sometimes being brought in to play for special occasions such as air corps cadets' graduation at Maxwell Field, Montgomery,

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<sup>582</sup>"Bumpy--But--Prosperous Biz," Variety, 24 June 1942, vol. 147, no. 3: 41.

Alabama; the Naval Training Centers at San Diego, California, Great Lakes, Michigan, and Orlando, Florida. 583

The war continued to mean good business for dance bands. Band leaders found that they did not have to travel to make a profit. The practice of "taking a loss" to perform on the radio, instead of at a well-paying theater or ballroom, ceased during the war. Band leaders demanded and got "location pay" that met or exceeded their "road" salaries, plus it gave their musicians a chance to rest from the daily grind of constant travel. The war placed entertainment at a premium and at the same time the draft and recruitment reduced the number of bands, so that the ones that survived were highly profitable. The fees for bands increased by as much as one hundred percent. One band playing a southern hotel in the summer of 1943 received a weekly fee of \$3,000. Five months earlier, the same band had earned \$1800 for a weeks' work.<sup>584</sup>

The music industry continued to post record-breaking sales during the war years. During 1943, alone, the recording industry expected a commercial sale of between 75,000,000 and

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<sup>583</sup>ibid.

<sup>584</sup>"Exit Red Ink for Bands," Variety, 8 Sept. 1943, vol. 157. no. 13: 35.

100,000,000 records. These figures are even more impressive when compared to the sales numbers for 1941 and 1942, the peak years for the industry when sales were between 100,000,000 and 115,000,000. Although it was hampered by the loss of manpower to the armed services and civilian war work, and though it operated with twenty per cent of its normal shellac supplies and donated about fifty percent of its commercial output to the OWI, the music business was able to generate high profits. But for 1943, the years' totals were not expected to be anywhere near the projected numbers. The war also caused recording companies to reduce the number of new tunes they pressed, restricting new recordings to artists with a proven commercial following. Manufacturers and publishers were forced to drop their less profitable releases from small bands and singers with little name recognition in order to concentrate their efforts on the top bands which promised the greatest profit. And the top bands did produce. By spring 1943 several records had sold over 1,000,000 copies, among these were "White Christmas"(the Bing Crosby version), "Chattanooga Choo-Choo," "Maria Elena," and "Green Eyes." Four recordings--"There Are Such Things" and "It Started All Over Again" by Tommy Dorsey and "I Heard That Song Before" and "Velvet Moon" by Harry James--were

responsible for over 3,700,000 disc sales.<sup>585</sup> Harry James, with over 3,500,000 recordings sold in the first half of 1943, was said to have surpassed the earnings of an individual musician for one-year sales in the history of Tin Pan Alley. The recording companies maintained profitable businesses. For example, Decca reported profits for the first six months of 1943 that were \$50,000 more than for the same period in 1942. and was able to pay its shareholders twenty-two cents a share more than the previous year. Many of the companies were able to pay higher dividends to their stockholders than in previous years.<sup>586</sup>

As the war progressed, sheet music continued to post record sales. Variety thought sheet music sales might go as high as 40,000,000 copies in 1943. The total for 1942 was 25,000,000. Speculating on the reasons for this boom, publishers concluded that people had money to spend, and sheet music was one commodity that was not rationed. And families were evidently returning to home-based entertainment, such as singing around the piano. With

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<sup>585</sup>"Ace Bands Peak Tallies," Variety, 7 April 1943, vol. 150, no. 4: 1.

<sup>586</sup>"75,000,000 Disc Sales in '43: Big Biz Despite War, AFM Ban," Variety, 25 Aug. 1943, vol. 151, no. 11: 37.

gas rationing prohibiting families from much traveling, Americans entertained themselves at home.<sup>587</sup>

The wartime prosperity of the music industry continued through 1943 with sales of 800,000 and 1,000,000 copies of a song no longer considered a novelty. Before the war, if a song sold over 200,000 copies it was considered a huge hit. One million copies in sales was almost commonplace during World War II. Publishers drew parallels with England's music business and the boom it enjoyed during World War II. Like the English, Americans found few luxury items to purchase with their extra money, so they spent it on sheet music, records, the motion pictures, and other forms of entertainment. People were paying what would have been considered exorbitant prices for sheet music (thirty-five cents) and as much as \$5.00 for the Broadway cast recording of the new Rodgers and Hammerstein musical Oklahoma!<sup>588</sup> By mid-1943, the Office of Price Administration (OPA) had become interested in the upward price shifts by the various recording companies. The major

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<sup>587</sup>Ben Bodec, "Music Biz Bouncing High: '43 Sales May Hit 40,000,000," Variety, 25 Aug. 1943, vol. 151, no. 11: 1, 19.

<sup>588</sup>"Novelty Songs, Per Usual, Lead Way in Critical '43: Music Biz Also Rode Wartime Prosperity Crest--800,000 to 1,000,000 Sheet-Seller," Variety Thirty-eighth Anniversary Issue, 5 Jan 1944, vol. 153, no. 4: 187.

manufacturers had begun to move their more popular artists from the pre-war thirty-five cent labels to the fifty and even seventy-five cent discs. The OPA also charged that the recording companies had failed to live up to their pre-Pearl Harbor promises to market a minimum number of thirty-five cent discs. The reasoning behind these price guidelines was to prevent inflation. No formal charges were ever brought against any of the major recording companies, but a committee to study the problem was composed of OPA representatives and members of the executive committees of the various record manufacturing firms. This committee was to work out a plan whereby prices and the use of artists could be set at a reasonable level so that all companies could have a profit. The government continued to insist that recording firms make a certain number of thirty-five cent discs, but the disc executives asserted that operating costs, including artists, materials, and manpower had risen so dramatically that no firm could produce discs at the thirty-five cent price and stay in business.<sup>589</sup> Although the government continued to insist that set amounts of records in all the price ranges be produced, the public demand for more discs allowed the manufacturers to ignore most of the government

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<sup>589</sup>"OPA Eyes Price of Records," Variety, 20 June 1943, vol. 159, no. 2: 37.

guidelines. The major record companies continued to produce the recordings that would maximize their profits.

Publishers and record manufacturers worried constantly during the first years of the war that the supply of paper and shellac, both vital to the music business, would be greatly reduced by the War Production Board. Faced with shellac rationing, the recording companies tried to solve the problem with "Shellac Drives"--having people turn in their old records to be melted down and made into new ones. The Joint Army and Navy Committee on Welfare and Recreation reported in September 1943 that it had distributed 300,000 new records to the fighting forces as a result of the November 1942-January 1943 scrap record collection instituted by Records for Our Fighting Men, and a second scrap record drive in May 1943 resulted in more than 300,000 new records that were available for shipping. This was so effective that some record manufacturers were not able to keep up with the numbers of old records and had to call a halt to the promotion. One company reported its shellac drives were so successful that it had supplies enough for many months to come.<sup>590</sup>

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<sup>590</sup>"No Further Shellac Cuts for Disc Co.s," Variety, 7 July 1943, vol. 151, no. 4: 44; Elliott Grennard, "Music Goes to War," The Billboard 1943 Music Year Book, 25 Sept. 1943, vol. 55, no. 38: 20.



On 1 April 1944, the government rescinded its rationing orders on shellac and the recording companies were able to purchase one hundred percent of their 1941 allotment.<sup>591</sup> There were also rumors that the United States Navy had developed a synthetic shellac substitute and that an Illinois industrial manufacturer had also discovered a substitute shellac that would meet all the uses for which natural shellac was needed. But recording companies warned that this would not mean more records since their factories were still affected by the manpower shortage which most non-war material industries faced.<sup>592</sup>

Sheet music publishers were less fortunate than were record companies. At first sheet music production was unaffected by the shortages other industries faced, but there were constant rumors that paper allotments for music publishers would be reduced. A new War Production Board order issued in June 1944 confined publishers to seventy-five percent of the paper tonnage they had used in 1941. Unfortunately, for music publishers, 1941 had been the year of the ASCAP strike, and they had not required their full

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<sup>591</sup>"Shellac Supply Hangs on '44 India Crop and Cargo Space," The Billboard, 27 Nov. 1943, vol. 55, no. 48: 98.

<sup>592</sup>"Pre-War Shellac for Discs Apr. 1," Variety, 15 March 1944, vol. 154, no. 1: 53.

allotment of paper since there had not been many new songs to print.<sup>593</sup> In spite of the paper shortage, sheet music continued to sell, and by October music publishers were counting 1943 as the best volume year for sheet music sales in the last fifteen years. There were no seasonal slumps in 1943; people continued to buy, the good songs and the bad. Music publishers tried to analyze the trend and could only conjecture that the smaller number of records available had helped sheet music's profitability.<sup>594</sup>

By mid-December 1944, Variety reported that the music business was keeping pace with the "stratospheric earnings" of films, theater, radio, and all other forms of show business. Bonus earnings from sheet music sales alone for ASCAP members in 1944 were \$1,700,000 higher than had been predicted, bringing the year's total royalty payments for ASCAP members to over \$6,000,000. This was higher than any previous year's profit and about \$1,500,000 higher than 1943.<sup>595</sup> These revenues came at a time

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<sup>593</sup>"WPB Order Snags Pubs on Paper," Variety, 21 June 1944, vol. 155, no. 2: 39.

<sup>594</sup>"Sheet Music Biz at 15 Year Crest," Variety, 4 Oct. 1944, vol. 156, no. 4: 1, 43.

<sup>595</sup>"ASCAP Coin Up, Also Sheet Sales," Variety, 13 Dec. 1944, vol. 157, no. 1: 1, 8.

when sheet music salesmen had not expanded their inventory of sales racks;<sup>596</sup> people simply were buying more music. Such large first-round sales enabled publishers to recover their costs almost immediately and to apply the remainder of the sales revenue to the profits. Some music stores complained that they could not keep racks filled: customers were buying everything they could find. By April 1945 the music business was still highly profitable, even with the government-imposed paper shortage. During the first week of April 1945, the War Production Board issued new orders limiting individual publishers to seventy-five percent of their consumption of either of the years 1941 or 1944, or five tons of paper, whichever was greater. Five tons of paper produced about 250,000 copies of piano sheet music, so the five ton allowance was not an adequate supply. The year 1941 was not likely to be chosen as a base measure either, since during that year broadcasters and ASCAP were "at war and music sales were off." Publishers still were not pleased with the prospect of 1944 as a base year either, since by then paper restrictions had settled at a sub-normal level of "75% of what they used in 1941." And publishers who had had hit

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<sup>596</sup>Sales racks in music business refer to displays of sheet music in venues other than music stores: newsstands, department, grocery, and 5 and 10 cent stores.

tunes in 1944 would fare better than those who had not. This uneven distribution caused unrest among the publishers, for in the music industry, a publisher could have a string of hits one year which would boost his paper consumption. In the following year he might be without a single hit and have more paper available than he could use, while other publishers would not have half enough to satisfy the demands of one or more hits. The music industry had no choice but to abide by the government's regulations and hope that the 1945 order would be rescinded as previous ones concerning paper rationing had been.<sup>597</sup> Some publishers sold their old stock of sheet music with new covers (there was paper for covers), and marked up the price of the music. People still bought it. Retailers took advantage of the situation to clear out their inventory of old sheet music. Sometimes customers were required to purchase one or more old pieces of sheet music before they could buy a new one. In several New York stores, salesmen were instructed to ration sheet music sales. Customers were limited to the number of purchases and the frequency with which they could be made. The going rate was usually two new songs a week per customer, with no limits on purchases of older stock on the shelves or in the store

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<sup>597</sup>"Stress Paper Dole Fallacy," Variety, 11 April 1945, vol. 158, no. 5: 35.

rooms.<sup>598</sup> It was not until July 1945 that the sheet music business noticed a slump in sales. Music salesmen and publishers stated that popular music sales had fallen as much as twenty-five to thirty percent in June and July. There were several reasons: 1) There was no strong top selling song to pull the others along with it; 2) Record sales had begun to recover from the AFM recording ban; and 3) Summer was always a slack time for sheet music sales. There was general agreement among publishers and salesmen that the first and third reasons were valid, but there was controversy over the impact of the increased sale of records on the sheet music market. Most publishers thought that record manufacturers had not yet reached full production and so were not putting out enough records to hurt sheet music sales. Despite falling sales in mid-1945, business was still quite a few percentage points above pre-

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<sup>598</sup>"Even Stale Music Sells Like Nylons," Variety, 4 April 1945, vol. 158, no. 4: 1, 20. The Billboard reported that priorities for defense did not force advertisers from the radio. New manufacturing plants and army camps created markets where none had existed before. Old markets were booming. There were new markets in the South for foods, drugs, and toiletries. People who had been on welfare now worked in defense plants and other war-related work. Ed Wood, general sales manager for the Mutual Broadcasting Company, said, "The purchasing power of the lower classes is so tremendously increased that it is now comparable to what it was in 1928--this despite the income tax." The Billboard, 6 Dec. 1941, vol. 53, no. 49: 6.

war figures. Experienced music businessmen maintained that "the music business since the start of the big battle has jumped 50%."<sup>599</sup>

However, instrumental musicians, dance bands, and orchestra performers did not fare as well. When the American Federation of Musicians barred its members from making recordings in mid-1942, it removed a large portion of the income that was available to instrumentalists. Between 1942 and 1943, AFM members lost over \$4,000,000.<sup>600</sup> The other factions in this dispute--recording companies, transcription services, and publishing houses--lost comparatively little money during the strike. Recording companies were forced by wartime shortages of materials and workers to reduce the number of new releases and to confine these new releases to the best tunes and the most popular performers. Million record sales became commonplace as a result of this selective recording. The only difficulty faced by the publishing companies

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<sup>599</sup>"Another Slump in Sheet Sales," Variety, 25 July 1945, vol. 159, no. 7: 71.

<sup>600</sup>"Musicians Have Lost \$4,000,000 in Jobs, but Disc Cos. Hurt Little by AFM Ban," Variety, 4 August 1943, vol. 151, no. 8: 47.

was exploiting new tunes without the benefit of recordings.<sup>601</sup>

Musicians were also hurt by the government's restrictions on travel. James C. Petrillo had attempted to secure a special dispensation on tires and gasoline for traveling bands and orchestras on one-night routes. When the government announced gasoline rationing beginning in May 1942, many bands that had barely survived the Depression and were already in trouble from lack of manpower, saw their livelihoods directly threatened. Bands that still had good tires decided to use their vehicles rather than let the rubber rot from disuse in storage. Other bands were not so fortunate. The lack of tires and charter buses and the prevalence of unreliable railroad schedules caused a "pyramid [of] travel grief." All of this tended to reinforce the decisions of band and orchestra leaders, who could afford to do so, to stay away from one-night schedules. Bands now preferred theater and "location" bookings; the latter were especially sought after for the radio time often available with this type of job. And bands and orchestras increased their fees to compensate for their higher travel expenses. The smaller, lesser-known groups did not survive and many musicians were thrown out of work. The lack of "name" bands on the travel

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<sup>601</sup>"Musicians Have Lost \$4,000,000 in Jobs but Disc Cost. Hurt Little by AFM Ban," Variety, 4 Aug. 1943, vol. 151, no. 8: 38.

circuit caused prices to rise when a "name" group was available.<sup>602</sup>

The restrictions faced by music businesses did not keep them from prospering. Although 1942 was the biggest year for the recording industry--which sold over 132,000,000 records--the years 1943 through 1945 continued to be profitable. Sales estimates for 1943 totaled 118,000,000 records and 1944 followed with 92,000,000.<sup>603</sup> Even though the sales figures diminished as the war lengthened, a direct result of the music boom of the early 1940s was that several large companies, that had barely held on during the Great Depression, were saved from bankruptcy. The twenty-seven month strike between recording companies and James C. Petrillo's American Federation of Musicians had made a dent in the production efforts of major record firms, but the shortage of manpower and raw materials had more of an impact on the business.

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<sup>602</sup>"Dancemen Spin under Wartime Blows," Variety, 29 April 1942, vol. 146, no. 8: 39.

<sup>603</sup>"1945 Expected to See Start of Record Boom," Variety Thirty-ninth Anniversary Issue, 3 Jan. 1945, vol. 157, no. 4: 135.



At the end of World War II, Variety boasted that 1945 had been "a year of years" for the music business. ASCAP reported royalty earnings of \$10,000,000 to be divided among the membership; this amounted to approximately \$20,000 for each member. Publishing companies also had record earnings. According to Variety, Santly-Joy Music Publishers reportedly grossed over \$1,000,000, while the other major firms enjoyed profits ranging from \$150,000 to \$750,000. It was estimated that record production could go as high as 600,000 discs a year when all materials restrictions were lifted--especially if the new product from RCA-Victor, the \$2.00 Vinylite (non-breakable plastic) disc was available in sufficient quantities to drive down the price. At the close of the war, there were approximately 130 record manufacturing companies in the United States, most of them looking to a post-war sales boom in plastic records. This new product, available for sale in racks like sheet music currently sold on newsstands, would decide which of these companies would survive.<sup>604</sup>

The music industry's sales figures for the period 7 December 1941-14 August 1945 also provide a clue to the mystery of why no

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<sup>604</sup>Abel Green, "This Has Been the Year of Years for the Music Business," Variety Fortieth Anniversary Issue, 9 Jan. 1946, vol. 161, no. 5: 247.

great war song appeared. An analysis of who was buying the records and sheet music and what types of songs were preferred reveal that a new force had entered society and the marketplace: the American teenager, and more specifically, the teenage girl.

The 1940s introduced the age when the adolescent emerged as a social phenomenon and marketing target in America. The teen revolution, which would develop and flourish in the 1950s, was launched in the mid-1940s. Adolescence became an age to be carefully prolonged, intensely experienced, and profitably catered to by American manufacturers as never before. The American advertising business discovered the youth market, assigning a new name to this stage of development from a child to an adult. According to some in the publishing industry, "teenagers," as adolescents were then popularly labeled, cared little about the war: "I think you should have more articles on dates and shyness," a girl wrote to Seventeen, "stories like those on atomic energy are very boring."<sup>605</sup> Another letter complained that a short story about the death of an older brother in the war was too horrible: "Who wants to read about it? It's enough to give one nightmares! Let's have

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<sup>605</sup>"Thank You for Your Letters," Seventeen, October 1945: 4.

more stories about lively teenagers."<sup>606</sup> The magazine itself was launched in 1944 to cater to the new fashions and fantasies of young girls.

Not all teenagers were bored with the war or as blasé as the young women complaining to Seventeen. The morale of teenagers, especially those boys who were or would soon be eighteen years old and eligible for the draft, was of great concern to the nation. Morale among high school students was a constant worry as evidenced by a number of studies undertaken to judge the reactions of high school youth to the war. Two education publications, School and Society and Social Education, published reports of their findings concerning student morale in March 1942 and November 1942, respectively. Stanford University Press published a monograph entitled "Wartime Morale of High School Youth," and the State College of Washington conducted a continuing investigation of the reactions of high school youth to the war. In March 1942 alone, four separate studies were undertaken. The fourth of these described a survey of morale at the end of the first full year of World War II, taken between 23 November and 18 December

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<sup>606</sup>"Thank You for Your Letters," Seventeen, May 1945: 124-127.

1942.<sup>607</sup> Although the report was based on a small sample of high school students from Muncie, Indiana; Oakland, California; Longview, Washington; and Spokane, Washington, the findings of the study were suggestive of the possible morale throughout the nation's high schools. The study argued that the essential ingredient in good morale was confidence and optimism, tempered with a realistic recognition of the difficulties of war that were yet to be faced. The study, entitled "The Test on the Effects of War," required students to respond either "Yes" or "No" to seventy statements about the war. The test dealt with three periods: the present, the remainder of the war, and the postwar period. The test was also designed to gauge student's reactions to certain aspects of the war: the military seriousness of the war, the economic effects on civilians, and the restriction and discomfort of civilian life.<sup>608</sup>

The results of the "Test on the Effects of the War" varied from school to school, but ninety percent or more of the students agreed with the following statements:

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<sup>607</sup>Lee J. Cronbach, "Research . . . Pupil-Morale After One Year of War," School and Society, 10 April 1943, vol. 57, no. 1476: 416-420.

<sup>608</sup>*Ibid.*

1. America has organized for this war faster than in 1917.
2. So far I have not suffered much from the war.
3. America will win the war.
4. The sacrifices civilians have made so far have really been necessary for victory.
5. After the war the United States will be more than ever the leading nation in the world.
6. Amusements and sports will be greatly reduced.
7. The government will set up a program to prevent poverty.<sup>609</sup>

Ninety percent or more disagreed with these statements:

1. The war has caused no difficulty for the average business.
2. Inland cities like Chicago and Kansas City will be bombed.
3. Food will become so scarce that civilians will go hungry.
4. Because of rationing people will not have as much clothing as they need.
5. This country will have a complete dictatorship (before the war ends).<sup>610</sup>

Nearly all of these widespread beliefs were of a cheerful, patriotic, confident nature. But on the following questions, opinion greatly divided the high school students:

1. If military affairs go badly, censorship will conceal the truth from the people. (Forty-four percent agreed).
2. There will be epidemics of disease among civilians. (Forty-four percent agreed).
3. Regular college work will be discontinued. (Forty-three

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<sup>609</sup>ibid.

<sup>610</sup>ibid.

- percent agreed).
4. A fair and lasting peace will be established. (Fifty-six percent agreed).
  5. All young men will be required to take military training after the war. (Forty-nine percent agreed).<sup>611</sup>

The results of this test of high school students' morale alarmed some educators. The mistrust of the government implied in the questions about censorship and epidemics showed, in the opinion of the testers, a lack of confidence in the government. There was also a strong tendency on the part of students to exaggerate the dangers and hardships brought by the war. Mistrust of business profiteering, misinformation about the rise in the cost of living, and the success of the American military, particularly in regard to shipping convoys to England, were also areas to be addressed so that the students' misconceptions of the war and the government could be corrected. But, the crucial questions concerning war mobilization, a successful conclusion to the war, civilian sacrifices for the war effort, and the United States' leadership role in the world were all answered in extremely positive terms.

Other responses in the survey that were of interest in gauging high school students' attitudes toward the war were:

1. Twenty-two percent thought President Roosevelt had taken over dictatorial powers.

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<sup>611</sup>Ibid.

2. Sixty-four percent maintained that the U.S. High Command should have sent more help to the men on Bataan.
3. Thirty-one percent thought most people were putting more than ten percent into war bonds.
4. Sixty-five percent agree that people today have about as much fun as they did before the war.<sup>612</sup>

The less than enthusiastic answers to questions regarding having "fun," purchasing war bonds, and opinions of President Franklin Roosevelt do not seem morale threatening when the students's ages are taken into consideration.

From these questions two results concerning wartime morale of the high school students seemed apparent. The first was that students had good morale regarding wartime conditions, but not as high as the testers expected according to the United States' achievements thus far in the war during 1942. The second conclusion the researchers drew from the study was that a large minority held positions that could be "construed as detrimental to morale." The survey results also showed that students exaggerated the scope and danger of the war:

1. Thirty-three percent agreed that half of the American soldiers will be killed or permanently injured.
2. Thirty-three percent agreed that if a community is bombed repeatedly, one fourth of the population will be killed

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<sup>612</sup>ibid.

3. Eighty percent agreed that most American men will be in the Army or the Navy.
4. Thirty-three percent stated that they were "constantly worried" about their friends in the armed forces.<sup>613</sup>

This set of questions and responses was alarming to the formulators of the survey because the apprehension that "half of the American soldiers will be killed or permanently injured" could only do harm to the morale of boys who would soon enter the military. Educators were encouraged to lead their students to the realization that "the physical threat of war is small for any given individual," and that students must be made to realize that "war [is] a job to be done but only as a temporary part of their lives."<sup>614</sup> Patriotic "flag-waving" was discouraged as well as the mention of heroic, "self-sacrificing" soldiers. The assurance that there would be a postwar future for them was supposed to make these students into "brave fighters." Students were noticeably pessimistic about economic matters. A sizable percentage agreed with the following statements:

1. All non-essential businesses will be closed. (Seventy percent ).
2. Taxes will be so high most people can buy only the necessities of life. (Sixty-two percent).

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<sup>613</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>614</sup>*Ibid.*, 418.



3. Saving money will be impossible for most people. (Thirty-two percent).
4. Prices of food will rise so high most people will not be able to afford a balanced diet. (Twenty-five percent).<sup>615</sup>

Apparently fears of economic hardship, possibly fueled by memories of the recent depression, still remained. Students did not think the postwar economic picture much brighter:

1. Taxes will place a great burden upon the average citizen. (Seventy-seven percent agreed).
2. Prices will remain high for years after the war. (Forty percent agreed).
3. Most business will have to start over from nothing after the war. (Sixty-five percent agreed).<sup>616</sup>

In general students were optimistic regarding the postwar world, but they were pessimistic regarding economic matters. There were some optimistic trends in students' perceptions of the war:

1. Those students who believed that some of the states would be invaded by enemy troops dropped from forty-three percent to nineteen percent.
2. Students agreeing with the statement, "People will not be allowed to say what they think about the war effort," fell from thirty-one percent to thirteen percent.
3. Students who thought saving money would be impossible for most people fell from fifty-four

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<sup>615</sup>*Ibid.*, 416-420.

<sup>616</sup>*Ibid.*

percent to thirty-two percent.

4. Students agreeing with the statement "People will have less freedom in personal affairs than they did before the war," went from forty-five percent to fourteen percent.<sup>617</sup>

However, students still responded pessimistically to the following statements:

1. Women will take over most of the heavy industrial work usually done by men. (A jump from fifty-two percent to seventy-nine percent).
2. Regular college work will be discontinued. (An increase from twenty-eight percent to forty-six percent).
3. All nonessential business will be closed. (A leap from thirty-nine percent to seventy percent).
4. Most young men who left school to fight will get an education after the war. (Sixty percent to fifty-two percent).<sup>618</sup>

Students saw their world changing. Women were leaving the home and joining the workforce. Jobs in heavy industry opened up to women as more men were called to active duty. The increase of the students who thought most heavy industry work would be taken over by women (from fifty-two percent to seventy-nine percent) is a negative gain because this type of work was regarded as totally

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<sup>617</sup>Ibid.

<sup>618</sup>Ibid.

unsuited to women. They were being forced out of traditional wife and mother roles by the war. Heavy industry work was a signal to these students that there were not enough men to do those jobs.

These questions also dealt with mobilization and manpower resources just when many young men and women were entering the work force or about to do so as the necessity for using all workers in America became apparent during the first year of the war. The survey confirmed that after one year of war, the morale of young Americans was something for the government to be concerned about. About half of those questioned were pessimistic about the conduct of the war. Many appeared confused or misinformed about many aspects of the war, and students had not become either more realistic or more confident than they had been at the start of the war. An entire year of the war, for Americans, had not altered high school students' perceptions and exaggerations regarding the personal danger faced by soldiers, the economic outlook for civilians, or the eventual successful outcome of the war. Of course, with the limited, censored version of the war presented by the news media and allowed by the War Department and the OWI, it is understandable why the students had these perceptions.

This survey (and similar ones) was also an indicator of the new status of American teenagers. Their morale and role in the war and

eventually in the postwar world was of great concern to educators and to the government because these students and others like them would soon be taking their places in the factories and on the front lines.

World War II played a strong role in creating the cult of the teenager and changing the lives of adolescents. The war intensified the gap between generations, leaving the adolescents on the homefront as separate entities with increasing buying power and without young adults to serve as role models. Jitterbugs, bobby-soxers, and Victory Girls<sup>619</sup> were all identifiable groups within the American populace. With young men eighteen and older in the service, younger boys stepped in as "heads of families," and as "big men about town." They picked up easy pocket money in a labor-scarce work force. Girls, too, earned money to lavish on themselves by baby-sitting for parents on night shifts at war plants or in many cases, working in factories or defense plants

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<sup>619</sup>Jitterbugs take their name from a dance style in which partners two-step, balance, and twirl in set patterns. By the mid-1940s the term bobby-soxer became synonymous with teenagers, especially girls who donned the jitterbug "uniform" consisting of a pleated skirt, a baggy sweater, bobbysocks, and saddle shoes or penny loafers. Victory Girls or V-Girls was the label given to girls who picked up service men, usually at amusement centers. They were also called khaki wackies, patriotutes, and good-time Janes. LIFE, 20 Dec. 1943: 101-102.

themselves. Boys and girls under the age of eighteen accounted for 1.8 million members of the workforce employed on factories and farms by May 1943. By the end of the war, 2.9 million teenagers were employed, with four times as many fourteen and fifteen years old girls working than in December 1941.<sup>620</sup> In 1944, the number of employed teenagers between the ages of fourteen and seventeen had risen to 4.68 million. Many were employed part-time, but more and more young men and women dropped out of school to work full-time. War demands for labor and new types of jobs brought great changes to industries. It also meant new occupations for teenagers. Jobs that had traditionally been held by fourteen and fifteen year olds such as delivery and errand boys, street vendors, newspaper carriers, and houseworkers, now were passed on to younger children. Fourteen and fifteen year olds moved into employment in retail and wholesale establishments, previously occupied by sixteen and seventeen year olds. Older teenagers were removed from trade and the service industries and placed in manufacturing and mechanical work. This reversed a long-term trend of reducing child labor. The increases in teenage employment

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<sup>620</sup>Ella Merrit and Floy Hendricks, "Trend of Child Labor," in Richard Polenber, ed., America at War, 1941-1945, (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1968), 139.

came despite the Fair Labor Standards Act passed in October 1938 which barred employment of anyone under sixteen in industries producing goods for interstate commerce. The wartime demand for labor shifted the teenagers who were sixteen years and older into industry and manufacturing and left their previous employers in retail and service jobs dependent on fourteen and fifteen year olds. Most teenagers who worked did so out of choice, not necessity, and received wages which permitted them some sense of economic independence.

Wartime labor for teenagers put money in their pockets, gave them independence, and chance to share the war effort, but it also meant a loss of education for American youth. United States Office of Education figures show school attendance fell from 9.1 million in 1940 to 7.9 million in 1944.<sup>621</sup> Illegal employment practices spread during the war. Child-labor law violations rose by as much as fourteen percent in North Carolina between 1940 and 1943 and an astounding four hundred percent during the same years in New York. The Children's Bureau found the federal government's

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<sup>621</sup>William L. O'Neill, A Democracy at War: America's Fight at Home and Abroad in World War II, (New York: The Free Press, 1993), 249.

violations of the Federal Fair Labor Standards Act with regard to child labor to be just as egregious as the states'.<sup>622</sup>

World War II helped aggravate generational conflict. Teenagers found ways to release emotions arising from the intense war stimuli surrounding them, like swing dancing and jitterbugging, ways that did not always meet with their parents' approval. Nor were parents necessarily happy about and their children's opportunities for independence and self-reliance. The wartime demand for labor meant that almost any young person looking for work could find it. Teenagers took what had previously been "adult" jobs and received adult wages. These earnings often equaled or surpassed their parents' earnings during the Depression. It was hard for parents to tell teenagers how to behave when their salaries were helping pay the rent.<sup>623</sup> Teenagers of German, Italian, or Japanese extraction had special problems with their parents. Many of the teens saw themselves as wholly American, while looking on their parents as being at best inept foreigners, from alien nations which were at war with the United States. And

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<sup>622</sup>Merrit and Hendricks, 141.

<sup>623</sup>James H.S. Bossard, "Family Backgrounds of Wartime Adolescents," The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, (November 1944), CCXLVI: 35-36.

finally, teenagers not only accepted the new, they sought it: new ideas, music, dances, or clothing. Older people tended to prefer the status quo, looking on the past with nostalgia; at the very least they were cautious in accepting what was new. And the war accelerated, change in complex ways that restructured much of American society.

During World War II, for the first time in American history, adolescents had a separate identity, and for the first time adolescents had their own money. Promptly, advertising firms on Madison Avenue moved in to channel some of that money toward themselves. Since the war halted production of most consumer goods or replaced them with goods of inferior quality, Madison Avenue created new markets for the products that were available by promoting clothing crazes, popular songs, and dances. Most Saturday nights, multitudes of jitterbugging teenagers dropped their hard-earned coins in jukeboxes to listen to the latest recordings. By 1945, RCA, Victor, and Decca were each selling 100 million records annually, and jukeboxes had blossomed into an \$80-million-a year industry, with four hundred thousand of the flashing players in soda shops and dinners.<sup>624</sup> Home phonograph equipment

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<sup>624</sup>"Honor Roll of Hits Tabbed," Billboard 24 March 1945, vol. 57, no. 12: 3, 12, 64.



became a status symbol and essential for a teenager's social success.<sup>625</sup> With swing music the generational cleavage was established; "for the first time in American history teenagers were very much a social reality."<sup>626</sup>

Ladies' Home Journal inaugurated a section entitled "Profile of Youth," and newspapers like the Chicago Daily News launched widely-read columns on "Teen News" and "Teen Views." Unlike their counterparts in later decades, teenagers in the 1940s were still largely innocent, sexually naive, and relatively uncritical of adults and the world around them. A third of teens questioned in one study agreed that the most serious problem facing the American teenager was acne, and advertisers dreamed up salves, astringents, and facial pore cleansers, while teens were advised to avoid chocolate and peanut butter.<sup>627</sup> The Parents' Magazine discussed the negative effects skin problems could have on adolescent

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<sup>625</sup>"Home Jukes Set Motif for Postwar Play Rooms," The Billboard, 25 Mar. 1944, vol. 56. no. 14: 90.

<sup>626</sup>R. Serge Denisoff, "What Is Popular Music: A Silly Question?" Solid Gold: The Popular Record Industry, (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Transaction Books, 1975), 19.

<sup>627</sup>"Ten Biggest Problems for Today's Teens," Seventeen, October 1944: 117.

personalities, and the important role appearance played in helping young persons become "well-adjusted, self-confident members of society."<sup>628</sup> One physician warned that "acne can so disfigure a person so as to produce an intense inferiority complex and seriously interfere with his or her chances of success either in business or society."<sup>629</sup> Personal appearance became tremendously important in American society, and the newly empowered teenagers became a target of the advertising industry which was primed to take their money in exchange for the modification, adornment, and camouflaging of their bodies.

There were other changes in American society that signaled the rise of the teenager to prominence. During the Second World War, the new label "youth listening" began to appear in newspaper radio logs. Prior to this, music was classified only by genre: popular, classical, hillbilly, western, or sometimes blues was denoted as "race" music. One study reported that "the pleasure of 72 percent of radio listeners under 30 in popular music is shared by only 22 percent of those over 50 years of age." Conversely, one observer

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<sup>628</sup>Herbert R. Stolz, "How Appearance Affects Personality," The Parents' Magazine, January 1942: 20-21, 34, 84.

<sup>629</sup>Dale Hamilton, "Appearance Is Important," The Parents' Magazine, August 1942: 28-29, 76.

reported, "old, familiar music is more popular with older listeners."<sup>630</sup>

Paul Fussell contends that there was a tremendous amount of social cohesiveness during the Second World War and that community spirit during wartime was "revealed by the all-but-universal knowledge of the same popular songs by all ages, classes, and genders." He claims that Americans knew all the popular songs and who had recorded them: "Not to have known them would have been not to have played the game at all."<sup>631</sup> But there is evidence to suggest that not all of America was pleased with popular music and or part of what Fussell calls "a shared culture."

Serge Denisoff asserts that the older and younger generations were not reconciled to the same aspects of popular music. In the sixty years preceding World War II, Tin Pan Alley produced music that was acceptable for all of American society: men, women, and children. The professionalization of songwriting and publishing led to music that was uniform in style and primly moralistic in content. Tin Pan Alley music was careful not to offend Victorian

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<sup>630</sup>Denisoff, "What Is Popular Music: A Silly Question?" Solid Gold: The Popular Record Industry, 20.

<sup>631</sup>Fussell, Wartime, 188.

sentimentalities. Another characteristic of Tin Pan Alley music, before the advent of jazz and swing, was its standard form and content. In order to be accessible to the average piano player, popular music had to have simple tunes and standard rhythms of two, three, four, or six counts per measure. The most exotic rhythmic combination was the use of a dotted eighth note followed by a sixteenth note. This particular rhythmic pattern was commonly found in songs of the Civil War era and then in Christian evangelical hymns which had their roots in the martial Civil War tunes of George Root and before Root, the melodies of the master minstrel, Stephen Foster.<sup>632</sup> Only jazz and hillbilly songs deviated from this form. Although jazz did begin to appear in some recordings following World War I and eventually became prominent in the 1920s, it was still on the fringe of popular music, and middle-class musical conventions were not directly challenged. As H.F. Mooney said:

Commercial orchestras of the period around 1920-50 followed more or less the "safe bet"--the aesthetic aspirations of the middle class market--as did, indeed, most of the Negro big bands. They presented a

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<sup>632</sup>Dee Brown, The Year of the Century: 1876, (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1966), 26-41.

music which despite solo variations emphasized precise, lush, ensemble harmony.<sup>633</sup>

Song lyric content also changed. Music of the depression concentrated on themes of love. A new outlet for popular music, the sound motion picture, did little to change this. Songs from the movies were traditional Tin Pan Alley fare in both content and style, because many New York-based composers took up residence, at least part of the year, in Hollywood and carried their songwriting form with them. By the Second World War, popular music was still considered good, clean middle-class fare, music that both the older and younger generation could share. There was, nevertheless, a generational conflict. Older Americans were drawn to popular dance band songs by the modest, inoffensive lyrics; however, it was the fast, syncopated rhythms that accompanied the tunes that appealed to the younger generation.<sup>634</sup>

Swing was a hybrid of jazz, with its roots in African-American music, and a milder dance band musical style that young middle-class whites would accept. Swing was also a music that many

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<sup>633</sup>H.F. Mooney, "Popular Music Since the 1920's: The Significance of Shifting Taste," 68.

<sup>634</sup>Denisoff, "What Is Popular Music?" 20.

adults perceived as "garbage," a sentiment their children did not share. A Barnard College professor termed the dance music "musical Hitlerism."<sup>635</sup>

Those who objected to swing attacked the dances teenagers invented for the music. Jitterbugs dancing in the aisles of the Paramount Theater and at Benny Goodman's Carnegie Hall appearances were criticized by the press as engaging in rebellious, riotous behavior. At a Louis Armstrong and Charlie Barnet concert in Griffith Stadium in Washington, D. C., in July 1942, some of the 18,000 fans leaped over the fences and began dancing on the ball field in front of the bandstand. Customers who had paid \$1.10 a ticket to sit up front complained they could not see. When the police, trying to evict the jitterbugs, stopped the music, a near riot broke out with flying pop bottles, some minor injuries, and several teenagers hauled away by the police for disorderly conduct. It took seventy-five policemen, with the aid of the servicemen present at the concert, to calm the crowd. Despite the police presence, the teenagers would not stop dancing. Eventually, the concert was halted and the jitterbugs sent home. The dance and its performers

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<sup>635</sup>*Ibid.*, 18.

were condemned by clergy, teachers, and parents.<sup>636</sup> The bobby-soxers' idol, the boy band vocalist, was another target of adult outrage. Psychiatrists and social scientists diagnosed the phenomenon as "mass trauma induced by the absence of men in the armed forces. The "swooner-crooner" craze was created by Tommy Dorsey's young singer, Frank Sinatra, at the Paramount in 1942. What began as a publicity stunt organized by Sinatra's manager, spread across the country until young teen-age girls everywhere "swarmed into the theater and wept, screamed, peed in their panties, and yes, even swooned when their idol sang."<sup>637</sup> In The Big Bands George Simon says, "Mobs would wait for them [boy singers] outside stage doors. In the theaters they'd howl and scream."<sup>638</sup> When Arthur Rodzinski, conductor of the New York Philharmonic Symphony Orchestra termed "boogie woogie" and swing music as "one of the greatest causes of juvenile delinquency

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<sup>636</sup>"Negro Jitterbugs Beyond Control," Variety, 29 July 1942, vol. 147, no. 8, p. 41.

<sup>637</sup>Lingeman, Don't You Know There's a War On?, 284-285.

<sup>638</sup>George Simon, The Big Bands, (New York: The MacMillan Co., 1975), 35.

today," and declared that the "'jive type' type of music leads to 'war degeneracy," the "King of Swoon," Frank Sinatra, replied, "Nuts!"<sup>639</sup>

Teenagers did not rule all of musical America in the first year of the war. In the Midwest, ballrooms reported the comeback of the waltz apparently because the younger "jitterbug lads are now in the Army, thus leaving much of the danceries to the older, more conservative clientele."<sup>640</sup> According to the Midwest Ballroom Operators Association president Carl Fox of Mason City, Iowa, "We've discovered that older persons like to dance as well as the young, provided they have an opportunity to dance the steps they are familiar with."<sup>641</sup> Old fashioned dance nights were popular with patrons of a Sioux City, Iowa, ballroom, with whole families coming to town for an evening of polkas, schottische and circle two-steps. Quadrilles were favorites again. At most Iowa ballrooms every third dance was a waltz, and music, though "less hot," was "twice as sweet." In the East, the Empire Ballroom's

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<sup>639</sup>Margaret S. Wells, "Music in the News," The Billboard, 5 February 1944, vol. 56, no. 6: 62.

<sup>640</sup>"Waltz Big in Iowa Halls," Variety, 15 April 1942, vol. 146, no. 6: 39.

<sup>641</sup>*Ibid.*



proprietor, Andy Perry, noticed an increase in the attendance of older persons at dates played by name bands. Several of the current popular bands had built their reputations with recordings of old-time standards, and this was particularly attractive to the older people. For example, Harry James and his band's recording of "You Made Me Love You" was an older tune repopularized during the war years. In Boston's Roseland-State Ballroom, three nights a week were devoted to older music and the style of dancing suited to the waltzes, fox-trots, and polkas.<sup>642</sup>

But the big growth was in music for the young. Tin Pan Alley, which was profiting from teenagers as a newly recognized portion of American society, did little to quell the fears of anxious parents. Swing music sold, and teenagers were buying it almost as fast as the sheet music could be printed or the recordings could be pressed.

By far the most substantial consumer of sheet music and records was the teenage girl. She had extra money and very few consumer goods on which to spend it. She also had more free time

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<sup>642</sup>ibid.

and had fewer boys to date, since most of the older teenagers were in the armed forces.<sup>643</sup> As *Variety* said:

Publishers are pretty well agreed on the main reason for the current boom in sheet sales. . . . Substantial contributors . . . are the girls in the family who have the means derived from their war plant employment, but whose going-out habits have been sharply limited by the lack of beaux.<sup>644</sup>

Adolescent girls amused themselves with songs played on the piano or the phonograph, and what these girls preferred determined the type of song Tin Pan Alley produced during World War II. What teenage girls wanted were songs that spoke of love in sweet, romantic terms. These were the same kind of songs that had been selling to Americans before the war, but now the buying power of teenage girls made love ballads even more profitable than before.

Jitterbugs became a barometer for musical popularity in the late 1930s. When one of the most prominent dance bands, led by

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<sup>643</sup>The initial drafting of men under twenty started in January 1943 and continued at the rate of 100,000 per month. This number was included in the Office of War Information's statement that beginning in January 1943, 350,000 men per month would be called to service, so the U.S. fighting force would reach 9.7 million men by the end of 1943. Paul Casdorff, Let the Good Times Roll, 86-87.

<sup>644</sup>Ben Bodec, "Music Biz Bouncing High; Sheet Music drawing Public's Surplus Coin," Variety, 25 Aug. 1943, vol. 151, no. 11: 1, 19.

Artie Shaw, ignored the tastes of these adolescents, it rapidly slipped from being a top band to one that had to fight its way back "via the jitterbug route."<sup>645</sup> Following this, music business managers and others involved in scheduling bands and the music they would play dared not ignore the jitterbugs' favorites. It seemed to Robert K. Christenberry, an expert in booking dance bands for hotels, that the teenagers knew "a hit band and a click tune when they heard one." Christenberry put their preferences to work for his own benefit by gathering a list of "1000 gals and their pals" who were dance band fans and encouraging them to write to him expressing their opinions of current bands. He was also interested in their opinions of new bands (meaning bands that were not yet nationally known). Christenberry maintained that the "kids were right EVERY TIME." He claimed that long before Harry James' band had a national following, the jitterbugs were writing about the young trumpet player and his band. Christenberry also said that he never made a change without consulting the jitterbugs by way of a questionnaire. His last poll, in September 1942, revealed that teenage girls were inclined toward softer music with string

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<sup>645</sup>"Ideas on What People Like in Music--and Why They Like It--Keep Flowing, Like Good Music," The Billboard, 3 Oct. 1942, vol. 54, no. 40: 65.

instruments in the bands and not the blaring brass music of past years. The type of music the jitterbugs preferred was called "sweet-hot," meaning music that favored faster rhythms and louder dynamics but was also capable of tender melodies and sentiments.<sup>646</sup> Hit tunes of the week ending 2 October 1942 bore out Christenberry's findings. Among the best selling records were: "I Got a Gal in Kalamazoo," "Jingle, Jangle, Jingle," "My Devotion," "Just as Tho You Were Here," and "I Left My Heart at the Stage Door Canteen."<sup>647</sup>

Other music business insiders agreed that adolescents were the hot target market for civilian composers and publishers. Jimmy McHugh, one of the most successful Tin Pan Alley composers, cautioned that composers had to know "what the kids want" because, "they sense musical changes before the composers do.

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<sup>646</sup>Ibid; "Sweet-Hot" refers to swing music that incorporates elements of the larger swing band sound with those of the traditional jazz ensemble. "Hot jazz" relies on freely improvised musical lines played by smaller groups--usually five to seven instruments. Arnold Shaw, Dictionary of American Pop/Rock, (New York: Schirmer Books, 1982), 179.

<sup>647</sup>Ibid.

They hear everything on that radio, and they analyze it as though they were working a mathematical problem."<sup>648</sup>

The buying power of American teenagers was officially recognized by the music business during the war years. Starting in June 1944, The Billboard began its annual poll of the musical preferences of high school students. Student newspapers in four hundred high schools throughout the nation were invited to participate in the poll. There were opinions from every section of the country. Besides establishing the leading bands and solo performers, the 1944 poll showed an overwhelming trend toward sweet music (with more strings a sentimental, overtly harmonious style that lacks the bite of true jazz) as distinguished from swing music. Sweet music was the preference in nearly two-thirds of the groups considered in the poll and the top three bands and top soloists in every classification were "on the sweet music side." The top three favorite dance bands were those of Harry James (116 votes), Tommy Dorsey (ninety-three votes), and Glenn Miller (eighty votes). Band leaders with honorable mention were Benny Goodman, Duke Ellington, and Kay Kyser. Nineteen other bands were nominated but did not have enough votes to qualify for the listing,

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<sup>648</sup>Margaret S. Wells, "Music in the news," The Billboard, 29 Jan. 1944, vol. 56, no. 5: 62.

and sixty-one different "coming" bands, showing a wide diversity of opinion, were named by the students.<sup>649</sup>

The Billboard poll of high school students also ranked vocal performers. The most popular male singers, working without a band, were Bing Crosby (127 votes), Frank Sinatra (122 votes), and Dick Haymes (138 votes). The difference in votes between Crosby and Sinatra was less than five percent. The youth market was not completely dominated by the "boy singers." The most popular male singer working with a band was G.I. Bob Eberle, a former Tommy Dorsey soloist (156 votes), Kay Kyser's Harry Babbitt second (139 votes), and band leader, Vaughn Monroe, third (sixty-eight votes). The most popular "female singer[s] not appearing with a band," was Dinah Shore (115 votes), followed by Ginny Simms, (seventy-four votes). Helen Forrest, "drew top preference as warbler with a band," and captured 104 votes; Kitty Kallen of Harry James' band garnered ninety-four votes; and Helen O'Connell, singing with Tommy Dorsey, received eighty-seven votes. Some of the singers were not actively working with bands at the time of the voting, but that was the way teenagers remembered them. The most popular male vocalists, regardless of their affiliation with or without a

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<sup>649</sup>"High Schoolers Say James Best," The Billboard, 3 June 1944, vol. 56, no. 23: 1, 12.

band, were Bing Crosby (164 votes), Harry Babbitt (138 votes), and Frank Sinatra (138 votes). The most favored female vocalists were Dinah Shore (204 votes), and Helen Forrest (forty-eight votes). Vocal groups favored by the teenagers were the Ink Spots (103 votes), the Andrews Sisters (sixty-four votes), and the Mills Brothers (forty-eight votes). Honorable mention went to the Pied Pipers, the King Sisters, Fred Waring's Pennsylvanians, the Modernaires, the Golden Gate Quartet, and the Merry Macs. 650

This last category is noteworthy for the range of styles represented from African-American gospel harmony to a polka band-turned into a dance orchestra for the duration.

According to The Billboard's poll, the top records of the 1943-1944 school year and the artists who performed them included (alphabetically): "A Lovely Way to Spend an Evening," by Frank Sinatra; "Begin the Beguine," by Artie Shaw; "Boogie-Woogie" by Tommy Dorsey; "Don't Get Around Much Anymore" and "Do Nothing Till You Hear from Me," by Duke Ellington; "Flying Home," by Lionel Hampton; "G.I. Jive," by Johnny Mercer; "Holiday for Strings," by David Rose; "I'll Be Seeing You," by Bing Crosby; "I'll Get By," by Harry James and also Dick Haymes; "Long Ago (and Far Away)," as

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650"Final Standing in Billboard Poll of Music Preferences of Hi School Kids," The Billboard, 3 June 1944, vol. 56, no. 23: 12, 65

recorded by Jo Stafford, Perry Como, Helen Forrest and Dick Haymes; "Mission to Moscow," by Benny Goodman; "My Heart Tells Me," by Glen Gray; "Paper Doll," by the Mills Brothers; "Poinciana," by Bing Crosby and also David Rose; "Rhapsody in Blue," by Glenn Miller; "San Fernando Valley," by Bing Crosby; and "Stardust," by Artie Shaw. The song that received the most votes from the high school students was David Rose's "Holiday for Strings, followed by "Boogie-Woogie," by Tommy Dorsey and the Mills Brothers' "Paper Doll." There were a total of 139 different records listed as popular with high school students.<sup>651</sup>

In a parallel survey in September 1944, The Billboard polled the preferences of G.I.s stationed within the United States. The same survey that was given to high school students went to all of the stateside military bases. The Billboard decided to pass up the annual college survey because it said there were not enough "collegiates to be polled, musically or otherwise." Instead, The Billboard "followed the boys and girls who would have been in college to their camps" in order to complete the survey. Hundreds of polls were conducted in camps and naval installations. The

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<sup>651</sup>"Top Records High School Students Liked in 1943-'44 First Annual High School Music Poll, "The Billboard, 3 June 1944, vol. 56, no. 23: 12.



results were almost identical to those of the high school students. One important difference was the GIs' inclination for bands that were "hot rather than sweet." GIs noted they liked their bands "loud and sending." They relished a band that "really blows when the brass lets go." The high school respondents wanted music "sweet and hot" with added strings in the dance orchestra, but it must be remembered that the high school ballots had a larger percentage of female voters than did the polls in the military camps. The service men and women also stayed away from any music with a military flavor. For example, Ginny Simms, according to The Billboard ranked only third in the female vocalists category because her radio appearances had most often been in connection with "a service slant." Kate Smith's radio show was also one of the top-rated radio programs on the homefront during the World War II years, but she was given a mere "mention" in the G.I. poll. The Billboard thought "the flag waving hurt, the boys like to do their own, and while Kate's good job on the home front gets her a top dialing audience it chases the trainees at camps far, far away." Still, the men and women in uniform had not drifted too far from their high school counterparts' taste in music. A second part of "The Billboard First Annual Survey of All Service Music Preferences" also confirmed that the music choices of the two

groups were very similar. Seven of the top ten recordings were listed by both high school students and service personnel, including: "I'll Be Seeing You," "Long Ago and Far Away," "G.I. Jive," "Holiday for Strings," "I'll Get By," and "Paper Doll."<sup>652</sup> The only noticeable difference between high school students and armed service members in the popular music knowledge quiz was the superior ability of the students to identify record labels. "High school kids," The Billboard guessed, "are able to spend much more time 'studying' everything about disks." On the other hand, "Once they don the khaki or blue these same kids, faced with the grim business of learning how to fight and kill, lose a little (but only a little) of their disk knowledge."<sup>653</sup> GIs also overwhelmingly preferred Bing Crosby's vocals over those of Frank Sinatra. Five of the top thirteen tunes were Crosby tunes, while Sinatra was listed only as a vocalist on Tommy Dorsey's version of "I'll Be Seeing You." Crosby's version of the same tune was the number one favorite with the GIs. Again, this disparity can be traced to the fact that the GI poll contained

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<sup>652</sup>"G.I.'s Tab Favorites; They're Still Kids at Heart," The Billboard, 23 Sept. 1944, vol. 56, no. 38: 20.

<sup>653</sup>"G.I. Disk Label Ratings; Boys & Girls Tell Facts: Little Difference Between a Serviceman or High-schooler, According to Survey," The Billboard, 23 Sept. 1944, vol. 56, no. 38: 72.

far fewer female voters than the high school poll. The GIs were not as fond of Sinatra for another reason: Frankie, a young draft-free man, was home, making the girls "swoon," while the GIs were away training, fighting, and dying. Bing Crosby was an older, married man, with a large family. He was not nearly as threatening to the GIs.

Both the high school students and GIs heard the music in similar ways. Most teenagers heard disks by way of radio disc jockey shows and on juke boxes. The GI survey showed that juke boxes were the number-one method of music listening on bases and camps; disc jockey programs were second. The Billboard's survey also found that nine of the top thirteen recordings featured a vocalist who was favored over the band. Possibly, the AFM strike was responsible for some of the popularity of vocalists over the efforts of the bands.<sup>654</sup>

United States forces stationed in Europe were also included, though informally, in The Billboard's survey. With few exceptions, the G.I.s stationed in European liked the same tunes at the front as their counterparts in the training camps. The number-one song at the European front was "I'll Be Seeing You," followed by "Long Ago

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<sup>654</sup>ibid.

and Far Away," and "I'll Get By." And they did not like marching songs. According to The Billboard, citing another illustration of a fundamental difference between World War I and World War II, "The absence of marching songs in the G.I. preferences is not surprising because the boys are just not marching to the wars--they're riding and when they ride they sing nostalgic or novelty tunes--not marches or military slanted songs."<sup>655</sup>

One area in which the overseas GIs differed from the high school students in The Billboard poll was in the purchase of sheet music. The GIs stationed in training camps and in Europe relied more than students on sheet music for their entertainment. The best-selling sheet music in order of preference was: 1) "I'll Be Seeing You," 2) "Long Ago and Far Away," 3) "I'll Get By," 4) "Paper Doll," 5) "G.I. Jive," 6) "Amor," 7) "San Fernando Valley," 8) "Besame Mucho," and 9) "I'll Walk Alone." GIs purchased music most frequently from local music shops, chain stores, the PX, recreation departments, or directly from the publishers. The GIs preferred music they enjoyed singing and were able to sing. As a result, some of the "hot" numbers which required some musical finesse were not among their favorites. As for the Hit Kits, published by

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<sup>655</sup>"G.I.'s Report Their Sing-Songs," The Billboard, 30 Sept. 1944, vol. 56, no. 39: 11.

the armed services for the servicemen, The Billboard reported on September 30, 1944 that fifty-two percent of the GIs polled used the Kits as opposed to forty-eight percent who said they did not use them. Sixty-four percent of GIs said they preferred to purchase song folios, with collections of hit tune lyrics as opposed to thirty-six percent who said they did not buy them. These figures were true only for servicemen in the United States camps. Men stationed overseas were dependent on Hit Kits for words and music of popular songs. The Billboard came to the conclusion that "the boys in uniform haven't drifted too far away from the boys in mufti. They still know what they want--and how."<sup>656</sup>

"The Second Annual High School Survey," 16 June 1945, for The Billboard was once again conducted with the cooperation of over four hundred of the leading scholastic newspapers and magazines in high schools across the United States. The report showed "a few music and personality yens of the kids who are wearing rolled pants and denim overalls this year. They still go . . . for the Bingle, the Shore, Andrews Sisters, and Harry James. Jo Stafford, Les

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<sup>656</sup>ibid.

Brown and a few others get plenty of attention, too."<sup>657</sup> The 1945 poll showed that high school students still preferred "sweet and hot" tunes over swing, Latin American, and "corn"--of the Spike Jones and His City Slickers' variety. The top ten favorite songs of the high school students polled in 1945 were, in order: "Rum and Coca-Cola," by the Andrews Sisters, "Don't Fence Me In," by Bing Crosby, "Candy," by Johnny Mercer, "Sentimental Journey," by Les Brown, "Ac-Cent-Tchu-Ate the Positive," by Johnny Mercer, "I'm Beginning to See the Light," by Harry James, "Hamp's Boogie-Woogie," by Lionel Hampton, "Cocktails for Two," by Spike Jones, "Boogie-Woogie," by Tommy Dorsey, and "Dream," by the Pied Pipers. There was a mix of "sweet" and "hot" music in the top ten, with "sweet " edging out swing by about ten percent. This contradicted older music listeners views' that anyone under age twenty-one was a "jump addict." One important difference between the teenagers' favorite tunes and those songs that were currently on the top-ten seller lists kept by Variety, The Billboard, and Your Hit Parade, was the fact that four of the top ten songs favored by the general public were not among the teenagers' favorite records. These four tunes were "I'll Walk Alone," which was in the number two place on best-

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<sup>657</sup>"2nd High-School Music Survey Tab," The Billboard, 16 June 1945, vol. 57, no. 24: 3.

seller lists for June 1945; "My Dreams Are Getting Better All the Time," in eighth place, and tied for tenth place were "Laura" and "I Dream of You." Disc jockeys were still most important to the teenagers in building their enthusiasm for new music; home record players were second, and juke boxes placed third. However, juke boxes were only three points behind home phonographs as the preferred way of hearing popular music. The Billboard concluded that teenagers might have changed their clothing styles, "going in for outside shirt wearing and long pants with the legs rolled up," but their musical tastes were steady, "still orthodox," and "what they yen sells."<sup>658</sup>

These polls had a practical use. They informed music industry leaders who was buying records and sheet music, who their favorite musicians were, what types of music they liked, and how and where high school students listened to music. A new record label could become a success if teenagers approved of its musical offerings. For example, Asch, a label that featured hot jazz, jumped from fifteen percent recognition and acceptance level in 1944 to forty percent approval rating in 1945, "which just shows just how rapidly the soxers get to know a label--if it has what

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<sup>658</sup>"Bobby-Sox Tab Disk, Tune Faves," The Billboard, 16 June 1945, vol. 57, no, 24: 20.

they yen."<sup>659</sup> The Billboard called high school students "the age group that admittedly forces more disk sales than any other--even if they spend their parents' dough." The teenagers knew the record labels and the artists and the "ones that get the votes are the toppers, the jazz, the original waxers, the polka crowd and some of the folk music platter pressers." If teenagers did not know a record label, the sales volume dropped because "no disk org[anization] that really gets up into the solid press run does so without having the Junior Prom gang rootin' for them." The Billboard thought it was impossible for a record to succeed without teenagers' support, even with a label getting help from juke boxes, disk jockeys, and other forms of songplugging.

The real test of high school students' buying power was shown in the results of an adult music preference survey made by The Minneapolis Star-Journal and Tribune. Adults answered "yes" to the following questions: "Have you heard the following singers in person, on the radio or on records?" Bing Crosby polled ninety-five percent; Frank Sinatra polled eighty-nine percent; Enrico Caruso polled forty-nine percent; James Melton polled forty-six percent; and John Clarence Thomas polled forty-three percent. Of those who

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<sup>659</sup>"Record Labels No Mystery to Soxers," The Billboard, 16 June 1945, vol. 157, no. 24: 21.



replied to the question, three percent had heard of none of these. The second question asked of adults revealed a reversal of fortune for Frank Sinatra. When asked "Which one did you enjoy the most?" The respondents replied: Bing Crosby with fifty-seven percent; Lawrence Tibbett with nine percent; John McCormick with seven percent; Enrico Caruso with six percent; John Charles Thomas with six percent; James Melton with five percent; Frank Sinatra with five percent, all other singers with two percent, and "none" with three percent. It was noted that all age groups gave Bing Crosby the top rating, but Sinatra was second in the twenty-one to thirty age group, and dropped in each successive group until the adults over sixty years of age ranked Sinatra in last place. This age group placed McCormack, Thomas, and Caruso higher than the other age divisions. Also the older the voters were, the more likely they were to record their votes from their memories than from actual concert or radio listening or record buying. All singers were placed in the same category by both men and women, although women did rank Sinatra fifth and men placed McCormack in a tie for the number two spot.<sup>660</sup>

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<sup>660</sup>"Bing Solid in Minnesota," The Billboard, 16 June 1945, vol. 57, no. 24: 21.

By the summer of 1945, the enrollment on college campuses had increased sufficiently enough for The Billboard to include college students in its annual survey of favorite tunes and musicians. The results published in the 21 July 1945 issue again repeated the pattern established by the GIs and the high school students:

This year ballots came in strong and representative of the nation . . . the cap-and-gown contingent's musical yens hadn't changed much . . . compared to the G.I.'s and the denim, rolled-up pansters (high schoolers) the inmates of the institutes of higher learning were about as hep.<sup>661</sup>

Musical tastes proved to be almost identical. Whereas the high school student poll placed Harry James in the number one spot and the servicemen voted Tommy Dorsey in first place, the collegians "voted them a dead heat" with each group gaining 246 votes. James and Dorsey were both "big draws" on campuses, and Glenn Miller, though a war casualty, was still a contender for the top spots with 117 votes. Benny Goodman's new orchestra was in fourth place with seventy-eight votes from the college students and third place with the GIs. Woody Herman was also ranked alike by both "the

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<sup>661</sup>"Colleges Confirm Other BB Polls," The Billboard, 21 July 1945, vol. 57, no. 29: 3.

G.I.'s and the mortar board wearers" with sixty-six votes from the collegiates.<sup>662</sup>

A comparison of the votes for favorite male singer showed Bing Crosby with a substantial lead over Frank Sinatra. High school students gave Crosby 250 votes and Sinatra 167; GIs favored Crosby 1,188 to 374 votes for Sinatra; and the college students voted 334 for Crosby and 234 for Sinatra. In the third and fourth spots were Dick Haymes and Perry Como. Haymes garnered seventy-five votes from high schoolers, 306 votes from GIs and 132 votes from college students. Perry Como received forty-nine votes from high school students, 308 from GIs and 87 from college students. College students also gave Bob Eberly 155 votes, but Eberly did not register on the other polls. The favorite female vocalist, for the third year in a row, was Dinah Shore. She lead the nearest contender, Jo Stafford, with 196 votes from high schoolers, 902 from GIs, and 297 from college students. Jo Stafford followed with one hundred votes from high school students, 319 from GIs, and 165 from collegiates. In the "singing groups" category, the Ink Spots took first place away from the Andrews Sisters by a thirty-point margin. This was a surprise as

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<sup>662</sup>ibid.

both high schoolers and GIs voted the Andrews Sisters in first place, with two hundred votes and 682 votes respectively. The college poll gave the Ink Spots 204 votes and the Andrews Sisters 174 votes.<sup>663</sup>

The highest rated songs by GIs, college students, and teenagers were: "Don't Fence Me In," "Rum and Coca-Cola," "Sentimental Journey," "Laura," "Ac-Cent-Tchu-Ate the Positive," "Candy," and "I'll Walk Alone."<sup>664</sup> The reason for the survey's equivalent findings on both sides of the Atlantic, The Billboard surmised, was that both college students and GIs got their music from records played on phonographs, radios, or juke boxes, "whereas prom and dance dates contributed solidly to music faves in past years . . . under present conditions the tunes are made in denim, cap and gown, khaki and bell bottom trousers circles by disks, disks, disks."<sup>665</sup> In previous years, dance bands playing at colleges had a great influence on the students' musical choices, but during the

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<sup>663</sup>"They've Done It Again: G.I. and Soxers' Yens Repeat," The Billboard, 21 July 1945, vol. 57, no. 29: 15.

<sup>664</sup>"Camp(us) Tune, Disk, Label Faves," The Billboard, 28 July 1945, vol. 57, no. 30: 15.

<sup>665</sup>"They've Done It Again: G.I. and Soxers' Yens Repeat," The Billboard, 21 July 1945, vol. 57, no. 29: 15.

war, with "band dates and all other college musical dates at a minimum, radio, disks, theater dates and other personal appearance stuff have a great deal more to do with what they like."<sup>666</sup>

One of the few ways that college students could hear new bands and new music was at live concerts if their campuses happened to be adjacent to or part of an army or navy installation. Many colleges had students and military personnel sharing the same buildings and students were able to take advantage of the opportunity to hear live music when the bands played for service men and women. Travel restrictions had kept most of the dance bands from playing college proms and dances, so it was not as easy for new bands to get a following or for songs that had not been recorded and played on the radio to gain much of an audience. The college poll tended to stay with the established bands and failed to pick any "new outfits" or "unknowns" as serious contenders for spots on the favorites list. The Billboard thought this was due to the fact that college students "haven't had the opportunity of hearing any 'fresh' groups of sidemen. That's going to have to wait 'til V-J Day and after."<sup>667</sup>

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<sup>666</sup>ibid.

<sup>667</sup>ibid.

The Billboard acknowledged the buying power of the older teenagers and their ability to boost a song or a band into prominence: "The boys and girls in camps and colleges are the cream of pop music fans. It's been in this group that most names have been built (this building starts in the soxers' classes but doesn't get solid until they graduate from secondary schools)." And music industry members were advised to follow the 1945 survey selections of college students and GIs: "Cut the survey boxes out--paste them in your next year's diary--date July 1946--and see how the colleges and camps have pointed the way for the music biz."<sup>668</sup>

The Billboard concluded that "since the colleges still train the future of America, what they 'know' about pop stuff is important."<sup>669</sup>

Before 7 December 1941, Variety began a series of columns written by the staff of various college newspapers. These columns were really opinion polls of the current college students' taste in popular music. The schools contacted were almost completely in agreement on the types of music favored on American college

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<sup>668</sup>ibid.

<sup>669</sup>"They've Done It Again: G.I. and Soxers' Yens Repeat," The Billboard, 21 July 1945, vol. 57, no. 29: 15.

campuses. The Daily Californian from the University of California at Berkeley stated that, "Sweet swing, the nation's favorite, is . . . the students' favorite." Big name bands like that of Tommy Dorsey and Glenn Miller were especially popular and "draw Californians like beer draws Betas." Those students who preferred "hot jazz" had to travel to San Francisco, particularly if their interest was "modern Negro jazz" from New Orleans.<sup>670</sup>

The Syracuse Daily Orange predicted that students would prefer bands that would play "sweet" music consistently. Donald R. Larrabee, the author of the column, cited as evidence the fact that students at the University of Syracuse emptied the dance floors when "the band broke into a killer such as 'Persian Rug,' but were quick to return 'en masse' when the boys struck up a romantic ballad."<sup>671</sup> Larrabee found this to be the trend on every eastern campus. Sweet music was favored for dancing and "hot and groovy jive" was best for listening. A poll of Syracuse sororities and fraternities found that the women unanimously preferred "Everything I Love," "This Love of Mine," and "Piano Concerto." The

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<sup>670</sup>Don Matthews, "College Rhythm," Variety, 3 Dec. 1941, vol. 144, no. 13: 50.

<sup>671</sup>Donald R. Larrabee, "College Rhythm," Variety, 17 Dec. 1941, vol. 145, no. 2: 50.

men also were partial to ballads, the number-one tune being Harry James' version of "You Made Me Love You."<sup>672</sup>

In the year following Pearl Harbor, Variety continued the "College Rhythm" column, but it was not a weekly feature as it had been before the war and soon after it was dropped from the schedule. In a 14 January 1942 column, Harley Bowers, editor of the University of Georgia newspaper, The Red and Black, stated that Georgia college students were the most critical group in the South whether they were listening to jukeboxes, radio, or orchestras. He also said that Georgia students would not accept an orchestra on reputation alone; the group would have to prove itself through a personal appearance. Bands that were popular in the East were not necessarily those popular in the South. For example, the only "colored orchestra that received any recognition [was] Erskine Hawkins, who had quite a few popular recordings in the jukeboxes."<sup>673</sup> Georgia students favored music that varied from swing to fast jive. Of the leading bands making appearances at the Georgia campus, the following were favorites: Glenn Miller, Tommy

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<sup>672</sup>ibid.

<sup>673</sup>Harley Bowers, "College Rhythm," Variety, 14 Jan. 1942, vol. 145, no. 6: 38.



Dorsey, Kay Kyser, and Charlie Spivak. Serious contenders for the favored spots were Benny Goodman and Bob Crosby. In the juke boxes, Georgia students did not appear to be as fickle as the general public. When a tune reached one of the top spots, it stayed there for months. Favorites in the juke boxes were records by Glenn Miller, Tommy Dorsey, Benny Goodman, and Kay Kyser. The fraternity and sorority houses also had their own juke boxes, and the "jealousy between houses . . . keeps the record companies in business, because the record buyers get almost every record in an effort to please everyone."<sup>674</sup> Glenn Miller's was the favorite on the Georgia campus. Bowers thought that any of Miller's recordings would be welcomed and "if it should happen that the recording isn't tops, Georgia students are so prejudiced in his favor that they would still think it the best." Georgia collegians "love[d] their dancing . . . [took] their music seriously and really believe[d] in that thing called swing."<sup>675</sup>

In late January 1942, students at Northwestern University, Evanston, Illinois, said, in the Daily Northwestern, "War or no war, we like lots of dance music--not only one type but all types. The

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<sup>674</sup>ibid.

<sup>675</sup>ibid.

solid rhythms of Glenn Miller take the lead as the best all around favorite."<sup>676</sup> Every fraternity and sorority house on the Northwestern campus boasted a large phonograph and a fraternity record chairman who scouted music stores for sweet, swing, and jive. Sorority tastes were somewhat different, leaning almost exclusively to "sweet" with an occasional "hot" number. The girls favored Glenn Miller, Artie Shaw, Tommy Dorsey, and Jimmy Dorsey. Since Northwestern was located so close to Chicago, students had many opportunities to hear and dance to the best in popular music. Students patronized the places that put the emphasis on the orchestra and not on the "swank atmosphere." As with most schools, the real test of a band's popularity was the campus dance. Selection for the all-campus dance was a real sign of popularity. The Junior Prom in 1941 featured Benny Goodman and it proved to be the "largest formal in the history of the University." Lionel Hampton played for the annual Navy Ball in the fall of 1942 and proved to be number one with the swing fans; however, at times Hampton's penchant to show what he and his orchestra could do with their own brand of music caused some confusion in his audience. "NU's smooth dancers were lost to the rapid-fire jive

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<sup>676</sup>Jim Ward, "College Rhythm," Variety, 21 Jan. 1942, vol.145, no. 7: 52.

which the Hampton organization released late in the evening."<sup>677</sup>

By this time, most collegians either sat or stood around the bandstand and listened to the concert.

The Claw, UCLA Monthly Humor, from the University of California at Los Angeles, confirmed the trend that college students savored music "which is pleasing to the ear." "This means," said columnist Bob J. Thomas, "that sweet can't be beat, novelties are short-lived, and swing no longer accelerates the blood in the student body."<sup>678</sup> In Los Angeles as well as New York and Chicago, Glenn Miller's was the highest-rated band, having recently played the Junior Prom at UCLA. Although some students may have thought Miller's tunes over-arranged and so sweet as to be "repulsive," the author regarded these students as "obviously eccentrics . . . to be shunned on campus."<sup>679</sup> Other dance band favorites were Jimmy Dorsey, Artie Shaw, and Tommy Dorsey. "The

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<sup>677</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>678</sup>Bob J. Thomas, "College Rhythm," Variety, 31 Dec. 1942, vol. 149, no. 3: 50.

<sup>679</sup>*Ibid.*

way they like 'em is sweet and lovely, and hot only if it's clever."<sup>680</sup>

In concluding this study of American popular music during the Second World War and attempting to discover the reasons for the failure of any martial war song or songs to ignite the country and become a nationally recognized battle cry as had George M. Cohan's immensely popular "Over There" in World War I, certain important points should be kept in mind. The first is that the search was misguided. The OWI tried to influence what is essentially a process of artistic creation. The OWI had little concept of the role talent plays in song composition. The government approached Tin Pan Alley with an assignment much as it did manufacturers of household appliances who were told to, and did, convert their factories to war material production. The OWI assumed that Tin Pan Alley could do the same: convert from writing popular music compositions focusing on romance and light-hearted subjects to songs that would stir Americans' patriotism and unite the country so it would aid the war effort and "Back the Attack." During World War II the music industry was run (and still is) as big business. This fact had an impact on the production of war songs; if a song

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<sup>680</sup>ibid.

was not a potential money-maker, music publishers and recording companies were not interested. According to William O'Neill in A Democracy at War: America's Fight at Home and Abroad in World War II, "The business of America was show business,"<sup>681</sup> and certainly Tin Pan Alley's many publishing houses and recording companies fit the corporate pattern of the 1930s and 1940s, so the business slant and the structured milieu of song writing cannot be discounted. But without the creative genius of men like Irving Berlin, Johnny Mercer, and Duke Ellington Tin Pan Alley would not have been as successful as it was during the war. Although the Tin Pan Alley style certainly is formulaic, the government never fully understood that popular music could not be written to order. All music has form, but that does not mean anyone who understands a particular form will be able to write a successful piece.

The OWI also did not know how to cope with the refusal of Americans to be coerced into supporting songs they did not care for. The government did not seem to be cognizant of the fact that Americans' musical tastes had changed, and they no longer accepted every composition coming out of Tin Pan Alley as readily as they had before World War II. The variety of music on the radio and

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<sup>681</sup>Ibid, 255.

excess cash to spend on records and sheet music gave the people a wider knowledge of popular music and a stronger voice in what types of songs became popular. This is not to say that advertising and merchandising were not employed effectively by Tin Pan Alley to keep certain tunes before the public, but these ploys mattered little if Americans did not care for the songs.

The OWI and Tin Pan Alley compounded their misguided search for a war song when they insisted that the new "Over There" was just waiting to be written or discovered. It was not until 1943 that the OWI and Tin Pan Alley admitted that World War II was a very different war from World War I, and the new generation had a musical style all its own. This did not include martial tunes. Another factor is that during World War II, radios, record players, and jukeboxes made music available to more people than ever before. Almost everyone in America and Europe could hear popular music. Because of the technological advances that made radios and portable phonographs easily transportable, the popular music of World War II did more to build morale, both on the homefront and for the fighting man, than at any previous time. Popular music was often as close to home as a person displaced by war work or military service could get. Popular music was easily accessible and deemed to be a necessity by both civilians and the military

alike. Unlike the majority of songs born of World War I, far fewer songs written during World War II dealt with propaganda, patriotism, and morale; songs written during the Second World War were more about sentiment than strength, more about romance than military victory. Of the one hundred-fifty songs best selling songs from 1941-1945 listed in Variety Music Calvacade, 1620-1950: A Chronology of Vocal and Instrumental Music Popular in the United States, (New York: Prentice-Hall, 1952), only eight specifically mention the war as a military endeavor: "Remember Pearl Harbor," "Praise the Lord and Pass the Ammunition," "This Is the Army, Mister Jones," "Comin' in on a Wing and a Prayer," "What Do You Do in the Infantry?" This calculation excludes songs closely associated with the war--ballads--as opposed to martial-style tunes. Best sellers in this category included: "The White Cliffs of Dover," "I Left My Heart at the Stage Door Canteen," "When the Lights Go on Again (All Over the World)," and "The Vic'try Polka"; Ben Arnold in Music and War: A Research and Informational Guide, says, "Twenty-seven popular war songs reached the top ten popular charts. In 1942 . . . seventeen percent of all popular songs reaching the top ten were war songs."<sup>682</sup> A look through the titles of the

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<sup>682</sup>Ben Arnold in Music and War: A Research and Informational Guide, (New York: Garland Publishing Co., Inc, 1993), 79.

songs on the top ten lists during the war years compiled by Variety and Billboard will confirm that the vast majority were love songs.

The strikes called by the ASCAP and the American Federation of Musicians suspended the production of new songs at a crucial time--the beginning months of the war. The combined work stoppage by these two groups lasted from the fall of 1941 until the last recording company settled with the AFM in November 1944. Popular music was not dormant during these years, but the possibilities for more "hit" records were diminished since publishers cautiously chose only those songs or performers which had a proven history of success. The chances of a tune from an unknown source getting recorded or published, much less gaining access to the "Best Seller" lists, was extremely slim. "Pistol Packin' Mama" was about the only significant exception.

Radio, phonographs, and juke boxes made popular music accessible for a majority of Americans and also made it possible for American culture to become more homogeneous than it had ever been. People all across the country tuned their radios to the same programs, laughed at the same comedy shows, listened to the same soap operas, music performances, sports events, and network news presentations. The radio and the juke box were also increasingly the vehicles by which popular songs were spread and also by which



the public grew tired of these songs quickly, usually in less than twelve weeks. Radio became both a builder and a destroyer of hit songs. Songs rose to the top of the popularity charts and then disappeared in less than three months. The life of a popular song in the World War I-era had been one to two years. Radio also displaced vaudeville stages and musical stage shows as the purveyor of popular songs. Furthermore, before the electronic age, people gathered around the piano or in groups for communal singing as a form of entertainment. By the time of World War II, records played either on phonographs or in juke boxes had replaced in group singing. Entertainment could be had for a nickel, and Americans became unaccustomed to singing in public.

And it is true that songwriters were just not writing war songs that caught the public's imagination. But it is also true that publishers would not take a chance on songs unless the tunes came from known composers with proven success records, and then they preferred songs which would sell--almost always either love songs or novelty songs. Record companies were reluctant to risk rationed shellac on anything less than a probable hit. The bands did often refuse to play war songs not wanting to explain their civilian status when so many men were in uniform. Band leaders did prefer to play their own compositions and arrangements. And audiences

did generally not want to hear war songs; they wanted to dance. All of this helps to explain the lack of a new "Over There."

World War II was a different war as well. Most Americans did not look at the Second World War (as they had looked on the first) as stepping in and "mopping up" the mess Europeans had made. This time the United States had been attacked. The war was so immense and caused such dreadful loss of life (perhaps 55 million military and civilian casualties), that it became impossible to see the war in romantic terms. Yet even in this global war, the United States was not invaded. American cities were not destroyed by bombs. People did not lose their homes. And except for rubber, sugar, and gasoline, there were no truly oppressive shortages. Certainly families with a loved one in the service had difficult times, but most Americans on the homefront experienced the war at a distance. It came into their homes by newspaper or over the air waves on their radios. As John Morton Blum put it, Americans fought the war "on imagination alone."<sup>683</sup>

On the whole, Americans at home did not suffer a great deal physically during the war. They were mobile and prosperous. New industries employed thousands who had been jobless or had never

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<sup>683</sup>John Morton Blum, V Was for Victory, p.16.

worked outside the home before. People who had been denied access to the American labor market were allowed into jobs that paid far above their former earnings. Confidence, lost in the Depression, was regained during the war. All Americans were encouraged to participate in activities to aid the war effort, and the national mood was purposeful and resolute. The most important of these factors was prosperity: that more than any other element contributed to the country's buoyant attitude. People had money for the first time in a decade, many for the first time in their lives. They were eager to spend, and with few consumer goods available, they looked forward to the day when they would be able to buy homes, automobiles, washing machines, and other household goods. An Elmer Roper survey for Fortune Magazine published 22 December 1943 asked Americans what they planned to buy first when the war ended. The number one answer was a car--21%; followed by a house--13.3%; furniture--9.2%; refrigerator--8.6%; washing machine--5.1%; house repairs--5.3%; and clothes--4.4%. But the largest group was those who had no specific buying plans--28.5%.<sup>684</sup>

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<sup>684</sup>OWI: RG 208; Survey of Public Attitudes, Dec. 1943: SG 118, WNRC.

In March 1944, a survey asked Americans what they planned to do with their war bonds. Twenty-four percent expected to buy a home, while 18% planned to use the bonds as income for living expenses. Seven percent wanted to buy a new car and 6% planned to start a new business or expand an existing one. Other expected to pay for their children's education or to buy household goods--  
6%<sup>685</sup>

In the United States, "Things were better than ever, and the soldier was missing out."<sup>686</sup> The war opened up a whole new world. The defeat of the Depression was replaced by a flood of money and the added frenzy to have some fun. For many young Americans "there was just that feeling that maybe there would be no tomorrow and to hell with it!" One woman put it this way, "Everybody was dancing and they didn't really care to hear Caruso, they just wanted to dance."<sup>687</sup>

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<sup>685</sup>OWI: RG 208; Survey of Public Attitudes, Mar. 15, 1944: SG 118, WNRC.

<sup>686</sup>Archie Satterfield, The Homefront: An Oral History Of The War Years In America, 1941-1945, (New York: Playboy Press, 1981), 282.

<sup>687</sup>*Ibid.*

Of all the reasons examined for the failure of the music business to produce a popular war song, perhaps the most overlooked was the rise of the teenage girl as commanding consumer in the popular music marketplace. Music publishers were, first and foremost, in business to make a profit. The newly-found purchasing power of American teenagers made them a primary target for all sorts of new merchandising schemes. Record and sheet music companies and their promoters attempted to appeal to young Americans with a product that would entice teenagers to part with their surplus funds. Songs of war and patriotism did not do this. Left at home with few young men to date, young girls spent their time listening to sweet love songs, romantic ballads, and an occasional zany novelty tune.

Since it was the teenage girl's money that contributed so significantly to Tin Pan Alley's profits, her musical desires became the focus of the music business. One of the most telling pieces of evidence for the primacy of the teenage girl's musical taste as the driving force behind Tin Pan Alley's marketing plans is a series of advertisements published both in Variety and The Billboard during the years 1941-1945. Columbia Records ran weekly half page advertisements depicting a teenage girl and a juke box. The girl was attired in the teenage "uniform": sweater, skirt, bobby-sox,

and loafers. Her hair was curled with fluffy bangs held back with a barrette and on her left arm was the treasured "charm" bracelet. She appeared to be leaning on and dancing by the juke box, which was pictured with musical notes issuing forth. There was a look of obvious enjoyment on the girl's face. But the salient part of the advertisement was contained in the large bold-lined letters over her head: "Meet Soozie Cue . . . she knows who's who!" The implication was that this figure represented American teenage girls and their strong preferences in popular music, songs, and performers. Below the illustration were the current tunes and the recordings that Columbia was boosting that week. There were small photographs of the performers and a positive, upbeat sales pitch with each song, but the eye-catching part of the page was the teenager, "Soozie Cue." Her unfailing knowledge of what songs are "tops in her book this week" was a forceful signal to the music industry of the power of "Soozie Cue's" musical taste.<sup>688</sup> There were no similar advertisements aimed at any other specific age or sex group in either of these periodicals.

Tin Pan Alley publishers repeatedly told newspaper reporters, the OWI, and anyone else who would listen, that they were anxious

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<sup>688</sup>"Meet Soozie Cue," The Billboard, 3 Oct. 1942, vol. 54, no. 40: 65.

and determined to publish war songs. Publishers and recording companies claimed to be on the constant lookout for the "proper" war song, but their actions suggested otherwise. With the exception of "Remember Pearl Harbor," "Praise the Lord and Pass the Ammunition," and "Comin' in on a Wing and a Prayer," no martial songs were strongly promoted by the powerful publishers, recording companies, or the radio networks. The latter two had brief appearances on "Best Seller" lists and Your Hit Parade, but no war song made a significant showing after 1943.

Amid all of the worry and concern about the morale Americans and the lack of a definitive war song, it seems as if the government did not analyze its own surveys or begin to understand the character of the American people during World War II. There was an extraordinary initiative on the part of average Americans who organized war support groups on every level of society and in their local and state governments: they volunteered for civil defense jobs; they conserved resources; they collected scrap of all kinds; they recycled materials needed for the war effort or those useful in everyday life; they bought war bonds--though not as many as the Treasury Department thought they should--or if, "like writers and entertainers, they had special skills, devot[ed]ing them to public

service."<sup>689</sup> It was a war for the survival of democracy and the preservation of freedom as Americans had come to know it. The country was totally committed to winning the war both on the battlefield and on the homefront.

Although opinion polls showed Americans were eager to aid the war effort far beyond what the United States government had ever asked of civilians, when it came to actually putting this willingness to work, the government was at a loss. Agencies like OWI were fighting a battle that did not exist. Once the bombs fell on Pearl Harbor, Americans forgot the isolationist versus interventionist divisions that had separated the country for several years. There was no need to convince Americans that the war was justified. They united against a common enemy in a just cause. They did not need a martial war song because Americans did not need to be convinced or coerced into giving their all for the war effort.

Love songs were the staple of the American popular music market before World War II, and they remained so during the war. Tin Pan Alley was conservative. It choose not to take chances with a proven song formula. People parted from loved ones during the war had a real affinity for love songs. Love songs were also the

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<sup>689</sup>O'Neill, Democracy at War, 142.



type of tunes that appealed to young women, whose surplus spending money spoke loudly and clearly to the burgeoning financial rewards reaped by America's music business during World War II. Americans--and teenagers--throughout the war got what they wanted and were willing to pay for . . . and that did not include war songs.

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## SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY

### Abbreviations:

ARA--American Recording Association  
Bb--Bluebird Records  
Cap--Capitol Records  
Co--Columbia Records  
De--Decca Records  
Maj--Major Records  
Mus--Music and Word Records  
OK--Okeh Records  
Vi--Victor Records  
Wor--World Records

1941

### Allen, Red

OK 6281 *K.K. Boogie/Ol' Man River*  
OK 6357 *A Sheridan "Square"/Indiana*

### Andrews Sisters

De 4097 *Shrine of Saint Cecilia/Jack of All Trades*  
De 3598 *Boogie Woogie Bugle Boy*

### Armstrong, Louis

De 4140 *When It's Sleepy Time Down South/You Rascal You*

### Barnet, Charlie

Bb 11153 *Merry-Go-Round*  
Bb 11194 *Little Dip/Ponce de Leon*  
Bb 11281 *Harlem Speaks/Swingin' on Nothin'*

### Barron, Blue

Elite 5001 *Shepherd Serenade/Elmer's Tune*

### Basie, Count

OK 6122 *Beau Brummel*  
OK 6365 *H and J/Diggin' for Dex*  
OK 6527 *Tom Thumb*

506



**Berrigan, Bunny**Elite 5005 *'Tis Autumn Again/Two in Love*Elite 5006 *I Got It Bad/The White Cliffs of Dover***Bon Bon**De 3980 *I Don't Want to Set the World on Fire***Boswell, Connie**De 3893 *Sand in My Shoes/Nighty-Night***Bradley, Will**Co 36147 *Flamingo/Swingin' Down the Lane*Co 36296 *City Called Heaven/I'm Tired of Waiting for You***Brown, Les**OK 6367 *City Called Heaven/It's You Again*OK 6377 *Joltin' Joe DiMaggio/The Nickel Serenade*OK 6696 *Mexican Hat Dance*OK 6430 *'Tis Autumn/That Solid Old Man***Byrne, Bobby**De 3773 *Do I Worry?/Nighty-Night*De 3774 *Two Hearts That Pass in the Night/These Things  
You Left Me*De 3969 *I Went Out of My Way/It's You Again***Calloway, Cab**OK 6084 *Bye Bye Blues/Run Little Rabbit*OK 6109 *Willow Weep for Me/Jonah Joins the Cab*OK 6305 *Take the "A" Train/Chattanooga Choo Choo***Carlisle, Una Mae**Bb 110033 *Walkin' By the River/I Met You Then***Chester, Bob**Bb 11017 *I Could Write a Book/Beau Night in Hotchkiss  
Corners*Bb 11227 *There Goes That Song Again/It's So Peaceful in the  
Country*

**Clark, Buddy**

OK 6392 *Moonlight Masquerade/Ma-Ma-Maria*

OK 6403 *Delilah/A Sinner Kissed an Angel*

**Clinton, Larry**

Bb 11166 *Loveliness and Love/You Started Something*

**Crosby, Bing**

De 3636 *It's Always You/You Lucky People You*

De 4065 *Shepherd Serenade/The Anniversary Waltz*

De 3032 *'Til Reveille*

**Crosby, Bob**

De 4009 *Two in Love/A Sinner Kissed an Angel*

De 4027 *I'm Trusting in You/From One Love to Another*

**Donahue, Sam**

Bb 11131 *They Still Make Love in London/Au Reet*

**Dorsey, Jimmy**

De 3629 *Amapola/Donna Marie*

De 3657 *Yours/When the Sun Comes Out*

De 3698 *Green Eyes/Maria Elena*

De 3775 *Blue Champagne/All Alone and Lonely*

De 3859 *Time Was/Isle of Pines*

De 3963 *Jim/A New Shade of Blue*

De 4102 *This Is No Laughing Matter/I Said No!*

Brunswick 03328F *I Remember You*

**Dorsey, Tommy**

Vi 27274 *Oh, Look at Me Now/You Might Have Belonged to  
Another*

Vi 27317 *Dolores/I Tried*

Vi 27338 *Do I Worry?/Little Man with a Candy Cigar*

Vi 27421 *Will You Still Be Mine?/Yes Indeed*

Vi 27508 *This Love of Mine/Neiani*

Vi 27690 *Violets for Your Furs/Somebody Loves Me*

Vi 27749 *How About You?/Winter Weather*

Duchin, Eddy

Bb 11200 *Sand in My Shoes/East Street*

Ellington, Duke

Vi 27326 *Flamingo/The Girl in My Dreams Tries to Look Like You*

Vi 27356 *Jumpin' Punkins/Blue Serge*

Vi 27380 *Take the "A" Train/Sidewalks of New York*

Vi 27502 *Bakiff/The Giddybug Gallop*

Vi 27740 *Chelsea Bridge/What Good Would I Do?*

Goodman, Benny

OK 6486 *Limehouse Blues/If I Had You*

OK 6544 *Clarinet a la King/How Long Has This Been Going On?*

Co 36039 *Breakfast Feud/I Found a New Baby*

Co 36421 *Pound Ridge/I Got It Bad*

Co 35962 *Perfidia/Let the Door Knob Hitcha*

Co 36050 *Amapola/Intermezzo*

Co 36429 *Buckle Down, Winsocki/Shady Lady Bird*

Hampton, Lionel

Vi 27409 *Give Me Some Skin/Three Quarter Boogie*

Vi 27529 *Chasin' with Chase/Now That You're Mine*

Herman, Woody

De 4113 *Someone's Rockin' My Dream Boat/Rose O'Day*

De 3643 *Blue Flame/Fur Trappers' Ball*

De 3761 *South/Fan It*

De 3972 *Bishop's Blues/Woodsheddin' with Woody*

Hines, Earl

Bb 11374 *I Got It Bad/Straight to Love*

Bb 11126 *Jersey Bounce*

Bb 11237 *Up Jumped the Devil/South Side*

Bb 11432 *The Earl*

Bb 11465 *Swingin' on C*

James, Harry

Co 36069 *Dolores/Walkin' By the River*

- Co 36246 *It's So Peaceful in the Country/Yes Indeed*  
Co 36412 *You've Changed/Nobody Knows the Trouble I've Seen*  
Co 36321 *He's 1-A in the Army and A-1 in My Heart (Helen Forest, vocal)*  
Co 36322 *I Don't Want to Walk without You (Helen Forest, vocal)*

Jarrett, Art

- Vi 27474 *Loveliness and Love/You Started Something*  
Vi 27571 *Delilah/The Nickel Serenade*  
Vi 27612 *The Bells of San Raquel/Ma-Ma-Marie*

Jesters

- De F8057 *Ma, I Miss Your Apple Pie*

Jurgens, Dick

- OK 6289 *You and I/Starlight, Starbright*  
OK 6401 *Moonlight Masquerade/Ma-Ma-Marie*

Kassel, Art

- Bb 11073 *Do I Worry?/Knocking at Your Door*

Kaye, Sammy

- Vi 27339 *My Ship/You Stepped Out of a Dream*  
Vi 27391 *Daddy/Two Hearts That Pass in the Night*  
Vi 27476 *Sand in My Shoes/Don't Cry, Cherie*  
Vi 27498 *A Rose and a Prayer/Harbor of Dreams*

Kenton, Stan

- De 4037 *This Love of Mine/The Nango*

King, Wayne

- Vi 27373 *A Worried Man/Broken Melody*  
Vi 27516 *Time and Time Again/Blue Danube Waltz*  
Vi 27535 *Time Was/The Corporal Takes Command*

Krupa, Gene

- OK 6130 *Let's Get Away from It All/Just a Little Bit South of North Carolina*

- OK 6266 *The Cowboy Serenade/'Til Reveille*  
 OK 6447 *Two in Love/This Time the Dreamin' Is on Me*  
 OK 6278 *After You've Gone/Kick It*  
 OK 6352 *Tunin' Up/Rockin' Chair*

Kyser, Kay

- Co 36244 *The Cowboy Serenade/You and I*  
 Co 36445 *The White Cliffs of Dover* (Harry Babbitt, vocal)/*The Nadocky*  
 Co 36354 *He Wears a Pair of Silver Wings* (Henry Babbitt, vocal)

Lombardo, Guy

- De 3675 *You Stepped Out of a Dream/The Band Played On*

Lucas, Lucas

- Elite 5009 *How About Me?/The Shrine of Saint Cecilia*

Lunceford, Jimmie

- De 3807 *Battle Axe/Chocolate*  
 De 4032 *Hi Spook/Yard Dog Mazurka*  
 De 4083 *Gone/Impromptu*

Martin, Freddy

- Bb 11167 *Flamingo/'Til Reveille*  
 Bb 11211 *Piano Concerto in B Flat (Tonight We Love)/Why Don't We Do This More Often?*  
 Bb 11256 *Blue Champagne/Be Honest with Me*  
 Bb 11393 *'Tis Autumn/Until the Stars Fall Down*  
 Vi 14587 *The Hut Sut Song (A Swedish Serenade)*

Merrill, Joan

- Bb 11125 *I Went Out of My Way/Summertime*

Merry Macs

- De 4023 *Rose O'Day/By-U By-O*

Miller, Glenn

- Bb 11042 *You Stepped Out of a Dream/Ring, Telephone, Ring*

- Bb 11219 *Adios/Under Blue Canadian Skies*
- Bb 11230 *I Know Why/Chattanooga Choo Choo*
- Bb 11235 *The Cowboy Serenade/Below the Equator*
- Bb 11369 *This Is No Laughing Matter/Humpty Dumpty Heart*
- Bb 11397 *The White Cliffs of Dover/We're the Couple in the Castle*
- Bb 10982 *Anvil Chorus (1 & 2)*
- Bb 11063 *I Dreamt I Dwelt in Harlem*
- Bb 11382 *A String of Pearls*
- HMV DLP 1013 *Intermezzo*
- Bb 11386 *Elmer's Tune*
- Bb 11388 *Jersey Bounce*
- Bb 11234 *Perfidia*
- Bb 11248 *You and I* (Ray Eberle, vocal)

#### Mills Brothers

- De 1542 *I Don't Want to Set the World on Fire*

#### Monroe, Vaughn

- Bb 10976 *The Last Time I Saw Paris/High on a Windy Hill*
- Bb 11273 *Two in Love/Cherry Blossoms on Capitol Hill*

#### Noble, Ray

- Co 36271 *Harbor of Dreams/If It's You*

#### Pastor, Tony

- Bb 11008 *Adios/Paradiddle Joe*
- Bb 11067 *Number Ten Lullaby Lane/For Whom the Bell Tolls*

#### Powel, Teddy

- Bb 11089 *Two Hearts That Pass in the Night/The Wise Old Owl*
- Bb 11092 *Talking to the Wind*
- Bb 11152 *I Went Out of My Way*

#### Ray, Alvino

- Bb 11108 *Amapola*
- Bb 11216 *Harbor of Dreams*

Bb 11272 *Don't Take Your Love from Me/Jealous*  
Bb 11275 *Deep in the Heart of Texas*

Robertson, Dick

De 3791 *Be Honest with Me/Goodbye Dear, I'll Be Back in a  
Year*  
De 3981 *I Don't Want to Set the World on Fire/I'm Alone  
Because I Love You*

Raymond Scott Orchestra

Co 36103 *Just A Little Bit South of North Carolina/In the  
Hush of the Night*

Shaw, Artie

Vi 27945 *Moonglow/My Blue Heaven*  
Vi 27536 *It Had to Be You/If I Had You*  
Vi 27069 *Blues in the Night*  
Vi 27664 *Rockin' Chair/If I Love Again*  
Vi 27895 *St. James Infirmary (1 & 2)*  
Vi 27885 *Frenesi*

Shore, Dinah

Bb 11204 *Jim/I'm Through with Love*

Spivak, Charlie

OK 6257 *Time Was/I'll Never Let a Day Pass By*  
OK 6280 *The Angels Came Through/A Rose and a Prayer*

Stone, Lew

De F8057 *(There'll Be Bluebirds Over) The White Cliffs of  
Dover*  
De F7987 *When They Sound the Last All Clear*

Teagarden, Jack

De 3844 *St. James Infirmary/Black and Blue*

Thornhill, Claude

Co 36391 *Orange Blossom Lane/Moonlight Masquerade*  
Co 36341 *The Bells of San Raquel/I Found You in the Rain*

Todd, Dick

Bb 11195 *Wasn't It You?/Just a Little Street Where Old  
Friends Meet*

Bb 11387 *'Tis Autumn/Tropical Magic*

Tucker, Tommy

OK 6320 *I Don't Want to Set the World on Fire/This Love of  
Mine*

Wood, Barry

Vi 27369 *The Things I Love/Talking to the Wind*

1942

Andrews Sisters

De 18312 *Don't Sit Under the Apple Tree/At Sonya's Cafe*

De 18398 *Pennsylvania Polka/That's the Moon, My Son*

De 18470 *Mr. Five by Five/The Strip Polka*

Barnet, Charlie

De 18541 *That Old Black Magic/I Don't Want Anybody at All*

Berrigan, Bunny

Elite 5020 *Me and My Melinda/Somebody Else Is Taking My  
Place*

Elite 5020 *Skylark/My Little Cousin*

Boswell, Connie

Brunswick 0333 *One Dozen Roses*

Bradley, Will

Co 36470 *Who Can I Turn To?/Sleepy Time Gal*

Breese, Lou

De 4107 *Humpty Dumpty Heart/How Long Did I Dream?*

Brit, Elton

Bb 9000 *There's a Star Spangled Banner Waving  
Somewhere/When the Roses Bloom Again*



Brown, Les

OK 6557 *Fooled/Ya Lu-Blu*

Ok 6696 *When the Lights Go on Again*

Co 36602 *Sweet Eloise/Here You Are*

Calloway, Cab

OK 6720 *Let's Go Joe/A Smo-o-oth One*

Chester, Bob

Bb 11562 *He's My Guy/By the Light of the Silvr'y Moon*

Crosby, Bing

De 4193 *Skylark/Blue Shadows and White Gardenias*

De 4249 *Lampighter's Serenade/Mandy Is Two*

De 18424 *Happy Holidays/Be Careful It's My Heart*

De 18429 *White Christmas/Let's Start the New Year Right*

De 18513 *Moonlight Becomes You/Constantly*

Brunswick 03456 *I'm Thinking Tonight of My Blueyes*

Crosby, Bob

De 4316 *Poor You/Last Call for Love*

De 4368 *Over There/Smile, Smile, Smile*

De 4390 *Sugar Foot Stomp/King Porter Stomp*

De 4415 *Black Zephyr/Blue Surreal*

Cugat, Xavier

Co 36559 *Sleepy Lagoon/Nightingale*

Davis, Scat

Hit 7012 *White Christmas/Hip Hip Hooray*

Donahue, Al

OK 6617 *Candles in the Wind/My Heart's on Fire*

Dorsey, Jimmy

De 4122 *Not Mine/Arthur Murray Taught Me Dancing in a Hurry*

De 4123 *Tangerine(Helen O'Connell and Bob Eberly,  
vocals)/Ev'rything I Love*

De 4132 *I Remember You/If You Build a Better Mousetrap*

De 4197 *I'm Glad There Is You/Tomorrow's Sunrise*  
 De 18376 *Take Me/This Is Worth Fighting For*  
 De 4103 *(There'll Be Bluebirds Over) The White Cliffs of Dover*

**Dorsey, Tommy**

Vi 27701 *Who Can I Turn To?/I Think of You*  
 Vi 27849 *Poor You/Last Call for Love*  
 Vi 27903 *Just as Though You Were Here/Street of Dreams*  
 Vi 27923 *Take Me/Be Careful, It's My Heart*  
 Vi 27947 *In the Blue of the Evening/A Boy on Khaki, a Girl in Lace*  
 Vi 27887 *Well, Git It!*  
 Vi 27876 *Moonlight on the Ganges*

**Ellington, Duke**

Vi 27856 *C-Jam Blues/Moon Mist*  
 Vi 27880 *Perdido/Raincheck*

**Fields, Shep**

Bb 11325 *Who Can I Turn To?/Autumn Nocturne*  
 Bb 11537 *Wonder When My Baby's Coming Home/This Is Worth Fighting For*  
 Bb 11583 *When the Lights Go on Again/Better Not Roll Those Eyes*

**Garland, Judy**

De 183230 *Poor You/Last Call for Love*  
 De 18549 *That Old Black Magic/Poor Little Rich Girl*

**Goodman, Benny**

OK 6497 *Somebody Else Is Taking My Place.That Did It Marie*  
 OK 6580 *The Lamp of Memory/When the Roses Bloom Again*  
 OK 6482 *Jersey Bounce/String of Pearls*  
 Co 36580 *Not Mine/If You Build a Better Mousetrap*  
 Co 36613 *Take Me/Idaho*  
 Co 36622 *Serenade in Blue/I've Got a Gal in Kalamazoo*  
 Co 36652 *Why Don't You Do Right?*  
 OK 6644 *We'll Meet Again*

Gray, Glen

- De 4166 *I'll Never Forget/Darling, How You lied*
- De 4298 *Here You Are/Oh. the Pity of It All*
- De 18479 *Don't Get Around Much Anymore/Don't Do It Darling*

Hampton, Lionel

- De 18394 *Flying Home/In the Bag*

Heidt, Horace

- Co 36645 *Pennsylvania Polka/When You Lips Met Mine*
- Co 36667 *Where the Mountains Meet the Sky/This Is the Army, Mister Jones*

Herman, Woody

- De 4188 *Fooled/You Can't Hold a Memory in Your Arms*
- De 18469 *Please Be There/There Will Never Be Another You*
- De 4353 *Elise/Yardbird Shuffle*
- De 18526 *Four or Five Times/Hot Chestnuts*
- De 18544 *Down Under/Ten Day Furlough*

Hines, Earl

- Bb 11512 *Skylark/She'll Always Remember*

Hutton, Ina Rae

- OK 6335 *At Last/What's the Good of Moonlight?*

Ink Spots

- De 18503 *Don't Get Around Much Anymore*

James, Harry

- Co 36478 *I Don't Want to Walk without You*
- Co 36518 *I Remember You/Last Night I Said a Prayer*
- Co 36533 *Skylark*
- Co 36549 *Sleepy Lagoon*
- Co 36566 *One Dozen Roses/You're Too Good for Good-for - Nothing Me*
- Co 36614 *He's My Guy/You're in Love with Someone Else*
- Co 36644 *Manhattan Serenade/Daybreak*

Co 36659 *I Had the Craziest Dream* (Helen Forest, vocal)/A  
*Poem Set to Music*

Jarrett, Art

Vi 27693 *How Long Did I Dream?/Humpty Dumpty Heart*

Vi 27851 *You Can't Hold a Memory in Your Arms/Don't Sit  
Under the Apple Tree*

Jenkins, Gordon

Cap 106 *He Wears a Pair of Silver Wings/I'm Always Chasing  
Rainbows*

Cap 124 *White Christmas/Heaven for Two*

Jones, Spike

Vi 27843 *Der Fuehrer's Face*

Jorda, Louis

DE 8593 *I'm Gonna Move to the Outskirts of Town/Knock Me a  
Kiss*

Jurgens, Dick

OK 6535 *I'll Never Forget/How About You?*

Kaye, Sammy

Vi 27870 *Here You Are/Johnny Doughboy Found a Rose in  
Ireland*

Vi 27832 *I Left My Heart at the Stage Door Canteen/South  
Wind*

Vi 27944 *Where the Mountains Meet the Sky/I Came Here to  
Talk for Joe*

Vi 27949 *There Will Never Be Another You/Let's Bring New  
Glory to Old Glory*

Krupa, Gene

OK 6607 *Skylark*

OK 6619 *Me and My Melinda*

Kyser, Kay

Co 36433 *Humpty Dumpty Heart/Romeo Smith and Juliet Jones*

- Co 36526 *Who Wouldn't Love You?/How Do I Know It's Real?*  
Co 36567 *Don't Sit Under the Apple Tree/There Won't Be a  
Shortage of Love*  
Co 36604 *He Wears a Pair of Silver Wings/Jingle Jangle  
Jingle*  
Co 36635 *The Strip Polka/Ev'ry Night About This Time*  
Co 36640 *I Came Here to Talk for Joe/Praise the Lord and  
Pass the Ammunition*  
Co 36521 *Johnny Doughboy Found a Rose in Ireland*

Lombardo, Guy

- De 4199 *How Do I Know It's Real?/There Won't Be a Shortage  
of Love*

Lopez, Vincent

- Elite 5014 *When the Roses Bloom Again/Somebody Nobody  
Loves*

Lunceford, Jimmie

- De 4125 *Blues in the Night (1 & 2)*  
De 18534 *You're Always in My Dreams/Easy Street*

Lyman, Abe

- Bb 11542 *Amen/He Wears a Pair of Silver Wings*

Martin, Freddy

- Bb 11426 *I Remember You/Fun to Be Free*  
Bb 11495 *Last Call for Love/You Can't Hold a Memory in Your  
Arms*  
Bb 11509 *Here You Are/Oh, the Pity of It All*

Marx, Chico

- Hit 7004 *Here You Are/Sweet Eloise*

McIntyr, Hal

- Vi 27777 *Fooled/I'll Never Forget*  
Vi 27803 *Tangerine/When the Roses Bloom Again*  
Vi 27859 *The Story of a Starry Night/We'll Meet Again*

McKinley, Ray

Hit 7006 *This Is Worth Fighting For*

Mercer, Johnny

Cap 103 *The Strip Polka/The Air-Minded Executive*

Merrill, Joan

Bb 11551 *Take Me/Wonder When My Baby's Coming Home?*

Bb 11574 *There Will Never Be Another You/You Can't Say No to  
a Soldier*

Miller, Glenn

Bb 11401 *Moonlight Cocktail/Happy in Love*

Bb 11438 *When the Roses Bloom Again/Always in My Heart*

Bb 11462 *Skylark/The Story of a Starry Night*

Vi 27879 *Sweet Eloise/Sleep Song*

Vi 27943 *At Last/I've Got a Gal in Kalamazoo*

Vi 27935 *Serenade in Blue/That's Sabotage*

Vi 1059 *Juke Box Saturday Night*

Bb 11445 *String of Pearls, A*

Millinder, Lucky

De 18497 *When the Lights Go on Again/That's All*

Mills Brothers

Brunswick 03436 *I Met Her on Monday*

Monroe, Vaughn

Bb 11433 *Tangerine/Tica-ti Tica-Ta*

Bb 11483 *Me and My Melinda*

Vi 27910 *All I Need Is You*

Vi 27821 *This Is Worth fighting For/The Corporal Told the  
Private*

Vi 27925 *My Devotion/When I Grow Up*

Vi 27945 *When the Lights Go on Again (All Over the  
World)/Hip, Hip, Hooray*

Morgan, Russ

De 4300 *Sweet Eloise/All Those Wonderful Years*

De 18374 *Just as Though You Were Here/Windmill Under the Stars*

Pastor, Tony

Bb 11435 *Lamp of Memory/Absent-Minded Moon*

Rhodes, Betty Jane

Brunswick 03315 *I Don't Want to Walk without You*

Ross, Lanny

Vi 27799 *Lamp of Memory/Blue Shadows and White Gardenias*

Sherwood, Bobby

Cap 123 *Moonlight Becomes You/Harlem Butterfly*

Shore, Dinah

Vi 27963 *A Boy in Khaki a Girl in Lace*

Slack, Freddy

Cap 102 *Cow Cow Boogie/Here You Are*

Cap 126 *That Old Black Magic/Hit the Road to Dreamland*

Cap 115 *Mr. Five by Five*

Smith, Kate

Co 36609 *Wonder When My Baby's Coming Home/Old Sad Eyes*

Co 36618 *He Wears a Pair of Silver Wings/Be Careful, It's My Heart*

Spivak, Charlie

OK 6646 *I'll Remember April/What Does a Soldier Dream Of?*

Co 36620 *My Devotion/I Left My Heart at the Stage Door Canteen*

Co 36642 *At Last/People Like You and Me*

Co 36649 *White Christmas/Yesterday's Gardenias*

Stabile, Dick

De 4351 *Be Careful, It's My Heart/You're Easy to Dance With*

De 4352 *At Last/He's My Guy*

Todd, Dick

Bb 11577 *When the Lights Go on Again/I'm Old Fashioned*

Tucker, Orin

Co 36565 *Tangerine/Always in My Heart*

Tucker, Tommy

OK 6702 *Just as Though You Were Here/There Will Never Be Another You*

Wheeler, Doc

Bb 11529 *Me and My Melinda*

1943

(The Year of the American Federation of Musicians Recording Ban)

Andrews Sisters

De 18752 *Shoo Shoo, Baby/Down in the Valley*

Carter, Benny

Cap 144 *Poinciana/Hurry Hurry*

Crosby, Bing

De 18651 *If You Please/Sunday. Monday or Always*

De 18564 *People Will Say We're in Love/Oh, What a Beautiful Mornin'*

De 18586 *Poinciana/San Fernando Valley*

Cugat, Xavier

Co 36651 *Brazil/Chiu Chiu*

Dorsey, Jimmy

De 18532 *Let's Get Lost/"Murder" He Says*

De 18571 *Star Eyes/They're Either Too Young or Too Old*

De 18574 *Besame' Mucho/My Ideal*

De 18582 *When They Ask About You/My First Love*

De 18593 *Holiday for Strings/Ohio*



Dorsey, Tommy

Vi 26054 *Boogie Woogie/Weary Blues*

Durham, Sonny

Hit 7073 *I'll Be Around/When They Ask about You*

Hit 7074 *Holiday for Strings/Don't Worry, Mom*

Durbin, Deanna

De 18575 *Say a Prayer for the Boys Over There/God Bless America*

Ellington, Duke

Vi 20-1556 *Main Stem/Johnny Come Lately*

Vi 26610 *Don't Get Around Much Anymore/Never No Lament*

Garland, Judy

De 18584 *No Love, No Nothin'/A Journey to a Star*

Goodman, Benny

Co 35869 *Cabin in the Sky/Taking a Chance on Love*

Co 36680 *Mission to Moscow*

Co 36684 *Solo Flight/The World Is Waiting for the Sunrise*

Gray, Glen

De 18567 *My Shining Hour/My Heart Tells Me*

Hall, Adelaide

De F8292 *As Time Goes By*

Hallett, Mal

Hit 7013 *Let's Get Lost/There Will Never Be Another You*

Hanna, Phil

De 4432 *My Heart Tells Me/Besame' Mucho*

Haymes, Dick

De 18556 *You'll Never Know/Wait for Me, Mary*

De 18557 *In My Arms/It Can't Be Wrong*

De 18558 *I Heard You Cried Last Night/I Never Mention Your Name*

Herman, Woody

De 18578 *By the River of the Roses/Do Nothin' Till You Hear from Me*

James, Harry

Co 36668 *I've Heard That Song Before/Moonlight Becomes You*

Co 36672 *Velvet Moon*

Co 36677 *I Heard You Cried Last Night*

Jordan, Louis

De 8654 *Ration Blues*

Kaye, Sammy

Vi 20-1527 *Taking a Chance on Love/Cabin in the Sky*

Kyser, Kay

Co 36657 *Can't Get Out of This Mood/Moonlight Mood*

Co 36673 *Let's Get Lost/The Fuddy Duddy Watchmaker*

Lombardo, Guy

De 18573 *Speak Low/Take It Easy*

Long, Johnny

De 4427 *No Love, No Nothin'/You Better Give me Lots of Lovin'*

Mercer, Johnny

Cap 141 *G.I. Jive*

Miller, Glenn

Vi 20-1523 *A Pink Cocktail for a Blue Lady/That Old Black Magic*

Millinder, Lucky

De 18569 *Sweet Slumber/Don't Cry. Baby*

Mills Brothers

De 18318 *Paper Doll/I'll Be Around*

Monroe, Vaughn

Vi 20-1524 *Happy-Go-Lucky/Let's Get Lost*

Morse, Ella Mae

Cap 143 *No Love, No Nothin'*

Renard, Jacques

Brunswick 6205 *As Time Goes By/I'm Sorry Dear*

Shore, Dinah

Vi 1519 *You'd Be So Nice to Come Home To*

Sinatra, Frank

Co 36678 *You'll Never Know/Close to You*

Co 36679 *If You Please/ Sunday, Monday or Always*

Co 36682 *People Will Say We're in Love/Oh, What a Beautiful Mornin'*

Slack, Freddie

Cap 146 *Silver Wings in the Moonlight*

Song Spinners, The

De 18553 *Comin' In on a Wing and a Prayer*

De 18445 *Johnny Zero*

Valley, Rudy

Vi 20-1526 *As Time Goes By*

Wald. Jerry

De 4431 *Shoo, Shoo, Baby*

De 4433 *Poinciana/Mississippi Dreamboat*

De 4443 *Silver Wings in the Moonlight/And So Little Time*

1944

Andrews Sisters

De 18606 *Tico-Tico/Straighten Up and Fly Right*

De 18754 *(There'll Be a) Hot Time in the Town of Berlin* (with  
Bing Crosby)

Barnet, Charlie

De 18620 *Come Out, Come Out, Wherever You Are/What a  
Difference a Day Made*

De 18685 *There's No You/Any Old Time*

Basie, Count

Co 36766 *I Didn't Know About You*

Brown, Les

Co 36763 *Sleigh Ride in July/Robin Hood*

Co 36769 *Sentimental Journey* (Doris Day vocal)/*Twilight  
Time*

Co 36701 *My Dream Are Getting Better All the Time* (Doris  
Day vocal)

Butterfield, Billy

Cap 182 *Moonlight in Vermont/There Goes That Song Again*

Calloway, Cab

Co 36611 *I'll be Around/Virginia, Georgia and Caroline*

Co 36786 *Let's Take the Long Way Home/For a Little Ballyhoo*

Carle, Frankie

Co 36760 *A Little on the Lonely Side* (Paul Allen, vocal)/*I Had  
a Talk with the Lord*

Co 36764 *Evelina/Right as the Rain*

Co 36777 *Saturday Night*

Cavallaro, Carmen

De 18631 *In the Middle of the Nowhere/Wouldn't It Be Nice?*

King Cole Trio, The

Cap 167 *Straighten Up and Fly Right*

Crosby, Bing

De 18580 *It Could Happen to You/The Day After Forever*

- De 18597 *Going My Way/Swinging on a Star*
- De 18608 *Amor/Long Ago and Far Away*
- De 18640 *Sleigh Ride in July/Like Someone in Love*
- De 18649 *Strange Music/More and More*
- De 18665 *I'll Be Home for Christmas*

----- and the Andrews Sisters

- De 23350 *Is You Is or Is You Ain't My Baby?*
- De 18754 *(There'll Be a) Hot Time in the Town of Berlin*

Cugat, Xavier

- Co 36780 *Tico-Tico/Linda Mujer*

Dorsey, Jimmy

- De 18637 *I Dream of You/Magic Is the Moonlight*
- De 18647 *More and More/Don't You Know I Care?*

Dorse, Tommy

- Vi 20-1608 *I Dream of You*
- Vi 20-1614 *More and More/You're Driving Me Crazy*
- Vi 20-1622 *Sleigh Ride in July/Like Someone in Love*
- Vi 20-1607 *Opus One*
- Vi 1574 *I'll Be Seeing You* (Frank Sinatra, vocal)

Ellington, Duke

- Vi 20-1618 *Don't You Know I Care?/I'm Beginning to See the Light*

Ennis, Skinny

- ARA 110 *Sleigh Ride in July/Jumpin' Jimminy*

Fitzgerald, Ella

- De 18605 *Time Alone Will Tell/Once Too Often*

Forest, Helen

- De 18600 *Time Waits for No One/In a Moment of Madness*

----- and Dick Haymes

- De 18661 *Long Ago (And Far Away)*

Carroll Gibbons and the Savoy Hotel Orpheans  
Co FB3049 *I'll Be Seeing You*

Benny Goodman Quintet  
Co 46767 *Ev'ry Time We Say Goodbye/Only Another Boy and Girl*

Gray, Glen  
De 18596 *Suddenly It's Spring/Sure Thing*

Haymes, Dick  
De 18604 *How Blue the Night/How Many Times Do I Have to Tell You?*

Heidt, Horace  
Co 36761 *I Promise You/Don't Fence Me In*  
Co 36776 *More and More/Lucky to Be Me*

Herman, Woody  
De 18577 *The Music Stopped/I Couldn't Sleep a Wink Last Night*  
De 18603 *Irresistible You/Milkman, Keep Those Bottles Quiet*  
De 18619 *Let Me Love You Tonight/Who Dat Up There?*  
De 18641 *I Didn't Know About You/Saturday Night*  
Brunswick 03517 *I'll Get By (As Long As I Have You)*

Hill, Tiny  
De 4447 *How Many Hearts have You Broken?/Rose of Santa Rosa*

Hutton, June with Paul Weston Orchestra  
Cap 177 *Sleigh Ride in July/Don't You Know I Care?*

Ink Spots  
De 18583 *A Lovely Way to Spend an Evening/Don't Believe Everything You Dream*  
De 18579 *I'll Get By as Long as I Have You*

James, Harry

Co 36758 *The Love I Long For/I'm Beginning to See the Light*

Jordan, Louis

De 8659 *G.I. Jive/Is You Is or Is You Ain't My Baby?*

Kenton, Stan

Cap 166 *And Her Tears Flowed Like Wine/How Many Hearts Have You Broken?*

Cap 187 *Ev'ry Time We Say Goodbye/Are You Livin', Old Man?*

King, Wayne

Vi 20-1587 *Amor*

Krupa, Gene

Co 36768 *I Walked In/I'll Remember Suzanne*

Kyser, Kay

Co 36757 *There Goes That Song Again/Gonna See My Baby*

Co 36771 *Like Someone in Love/Ac-cent-tchu-ate the Positive*

Leader, Leader

Regal Zonophone MT3735 *Goodnight Wherever You Are*

Lombardo, Guy

De 18634 *The Trolley Song/Always*

Long, Johnny

De 4439 *Time Waits for No One/Featherhead*

Lunceford, Jimmy

De 18618 *Jeep Rhythm/I Dream a Lot About You*

Martin, Freddy

Vi 20-1615 *Strange Music/Magic Is the Moonlight*

Martin, Mary

De 23456 *I'll Walk Alone*

Mercer, Johnny

Cap 180 *Ac-cent-tchu-ate the Positive*

Merry Macs

De 18684 *Sentimental Journey/Choo Choo Polka*

Mills Brothers

De 18599 *Till Then*

Monroe, Vaughn

Vi 20-1619 *The Love I Long For/This Heart of Mine*

Morse, Ella Mae

Cap 137 *Milkman, Keep Those Bottles Quiet*

Pied Pipers

Cap 123 *The Trolley Song*

Cap 146 *Marizy Doats*

Prima, Louis

Hit 7083 *Robin Hood/I'll Walk Alone*

Hit 7096 *Kentucky/A Fellow on a Furlough*

Rains, Gray

Hit 7087 *Time Alone Will Tell/Once Too Often*

Rogers, Roy

RCA Victor 2808 *San Fernando Valley*

Sinatra, Frank

Co 3687 *I Couldn't Sleep a Wink Last Night/A Lovely Way to  
Spend an Evening*

Co 36762 *I Dream of You/Saturday Night*

Co 36797 *There's No You/Dream*

Co 36768 *Saturday Night (Is the Loneliest Night of the Week)*



Smith, Kate

Co 36759 *There Goes That Song Again/Don't Fence Me In*

Spiva, Charlie

Vi 20-1636 *Ev'ry Time We Say Goodbye/Only Another Boy and Girl*

Stafford, Jo

Cap 171 *I Didn't Know About You/Tumbling Tumble Weeds*

Cap 153 *Long Ago (And Far Away)*

Cap 158 *It Could Happen to You*

Strong, Bob

Hit 7097 *Come Out, Come Out, Wherever You Are/And Then You Kissed Me*

Three Suns

Hit 7985 *Long Ago and Far Away/And So Little Time*

Hit 7114 *The Love I Long For/Don't Fence Me In*

Hit 7122 *Sleigh Ride in July/Oh, Maria!*

Tilton, Martha

Cap 157 *I'll Walk Alone*

Welk, Lawrence

De 4444 *Amor/I've Learned a Lesson I'll Never Forget*

1945

Andrews Sisters

De 18636 *Rum and Coca Cola/One Meat Ball*

Armstrong, Louis

De 18652 *I Wonder*

Armen, Kay with Guy Lombardo Orchestra

De 18672 *All at Once/Back Home for Keeps*

Baird, Eugenie with Mel Torme's Meltones

De 18707 *I Fall in Love Too Easily/Am I Blue?*

Brito, Phil

Mus 15047 *Don't Let Me Dream/A Cottage For Sale*

Brown, Les

Co 36875 *Aren't You Glad You're You?/The Last Time I Saw You*

Co 36896 *We'll Be Together Again/A Red Kiss on a Blue Letter*

Co 36769 *Sentimental Journey*

Co 36779 *My Dreams Are Getting Better All the Time*

Thelma Carpenter with the Herman Chittison Trio

Mus 320 *All of My Life/I Should Care*

Cavallaro, Carmen

De 18671 *The More I See You'/In Acapulco*

Como, Perry

Vi 20-1676 *If I Loved You/I'm Gonna Love That Gal*

Vi 20-1709 *Till the End of Time/That Feeling in the Moonlight*

Crosby, Bing

De 18658 *A Friend of Yours/All of My Life*

De 18675 *Out of This World/June Comes Around Every Year*

De 18686 *If I Loved You/Close as Pages in a Book*

De 18690 *I'd Rather Be Me/On the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe*

De 18720 *Aren't You Glad You're You?/In the Land of Beginning Again*

Brunswick 03618 *It's Been a Long, Long Time* (with Les Paul and His Trio)

Dietrich, Marlene

De 23456 *Lili Marlene* (German version)

Demarco Sisters

Maj 7157 *It's Been a Long, Long Time*

Dorsey, Jimmy

De 18656 *I Should Care/Twilight Time*

De 18670 *Dream/There. I've Said It Again*

Dorsey, Tommy

Vi 20-1669 *Out of This World/June Comes Around Every Year*

Vi 20-1710 *Nevada/That's It*

Garland, Judy

De 18660 *This Heart of Mine/Love*

Goodman, Benny

Co 36813 *Symphony/My Guy's Come Back*

Co 36908 *Give Me the Simple Life/I Wish I Could Tell You*

Gray, Glen

De 18639 *This Heart of Mine/Robin Hood*

De 18665 *I Walked In/I Don't Care Who Knows It*

Haymes, Dick

De 18662 *I Wish I Knew/The More I See You*

De 18706 *That's for Me/It Might as Well Be Spring*

De 18740 *It's a Grand Night for Singing/All I Owe I Owe I-  
oway*

De 18747 *Slowly/I Wish I Could Tell You*

Heidt, Horace

Co 36798 *Anywhere/My Baby Said Yes*

Herman, Woody

Co 36785 *Laura/I Wonder*

Co 36789 *Caldonia/Happiness Is a Thing Called Joe*

Holiday, Billie

De 23391 *Lover Man (Oh, Where Can You Be?)*

Ives, Burl

De 23378 *(The Ballad of) Rodger Young*

James, Harry

Co 36778 *I Don't Care Who Knows It/I Guess I'll Hang My Tears Out to Dry*

Co 36794 *I Wish I Knew/The More I See You*

Co 36833 *I'll Buy That Dream/Memphis in June*

Co 36838 *It's Been a Long, Long Time* (Kitty Kallen vocal)/*Autumn Serenade*

Co 36867 *I Can't Begin to Tell You/ Waitin' for the Train to Come In*

Co 36478 *I Don't Want to Walk without You*

Kaye, Sammy

Vi 20-1642 *All of My Life/Just a Prayer Away*

Vi 20-1662 *The More I See You/I Miss Your Kiss*

Vi 20-1684 *Gotta Be This or That/Good,Good, Good*

Vi 20-1738 *It Might As Well Be Spring/Give Me the Simple Life*

Kenton, Stan

Cap 202 *Tampico*

Cap 219 *Don't Let Me Dream/It's Been a Long, Long Time*

Krupa, Gene

Co 36784 *I Should Care/Cry and You Cry Alone*

Kyser, Kay

Co 36801 *Can't You Read Between the Lines?/Bell Bottom Trousers*

Co 36844 *That's for Me/Choo Choo Polka*

Langford, Frances

ARA 121 *Close As Pages in a Book/Ev'ry Time We Say Goodbye*

Lee, Peggy

Cap 218 *Waitin' for the Train to Come In*

Lombardo, Guy

De 18642 *My Heart Sings/A Little on the Lonely Side*

De 18737 *Symphony/Seems Like Old Times*

Martin, Freddy

Vi 20-1655 *Laura/A Song to Remember*

Vi 20-1747 *Symphony/In the Middle of May*

McIntyre, Hal

Bb 30-0831 *I'm Making Believe/I'm in a Jam with a Baby*

Merry Macs

De 18630 *Ten Days with Baby/Thank Dixie for Me*

Mercer, Johnny & the Pied Pipers

Cap 195 *On the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe*

Monroe, Vaughn

Vi 20-1619 *This Heart of Mine/The Love I Long For*

Vi 20-1637 *There, I've Said It Again/Rum and Coca Cola*

Noble, Ray

Co 36834 *The Wish That I Wish Tonight/So-o-o-o-o in Love*

Co 36893 *It Might as Well Be Spring/Full Moon and Empty Arms*

Pied Pipers

Cap 185 *Dream*

Cap 207 *We'll Be Together Again*

Ravazza, Carl

WOR 1010 *This Heart of Mine/Waiting*

Reisman, Leo

De 18693 *If I Loved You/What's the Use of Wond'rin?*

Shaw, Artie

Vi 20-1716 *That's for Me/Yolanda*

Sinatra, Frank

Co 36814 *Out Your Dreams Away/If You Are but a Dream*

Co 36825 *If I Loved You/You'll Never Walk Alone*

Co 36839 *I Fall in Love Too Easily/The Charm of You*

Spivak, Charlie

Vi 20-1663 *There Must Be a Way/You Belong to My Heart*

Vi 20-1675 *Can't You Read Between the Lines?/Santa Lucia*

Vi 20-1721 *It's Been a Long, Long Time/If I Had a Dozen  
Hearts*

Tilton, Martha

Cap 184 *A Stranger in Town/I Should Care*

Torme, Mel

De 18653 *A Stranger in Town/You've Laughed at Me for the  
Last Time*

Wald, Jerry

Maj 7137 *A Friend of Yours*

Whiting, Margaret

Cap 214 *It Might As Well Be Spring/How Deep Is the Ocean?*

Wilson, Teddy

Mus 317 *This Heart of Mine/Ev'ry Time We Say Goodbye*

## VITA

Kathleen Ellen Rahtz Smith was born on March 2, 1949, in LeMars, Iowa. She attended the University of Arkansas, Fayetteville, Arkansas from 1967-1970, majoring in Music. From 1972-1974 she attended the University of Maryland, College Park, Maryland, where she earned a B.A. degree in History in 1974. She earned an M.A. in Woman's History from the University of Maryland, College Park, Maryland, in 1981. Her thesis, Lieutenant Colonel Emily U. Miller, a Biography, was published by the Northwestern State University of Louisiana Press in 1984. She enrolled in the doctoral program at Louisiana State University in August 1985 and upon completion of the degree plans to continue teaching. She is a member of Phi Alpha Theta, history honor society; Sigma Alpha Iota, music honor society; and Sigma Tau Delta, English honor society.

DOCTORAL EXAMINATION AND DISSERTATION REPORT

**Candidate:** Kathleen Ellen Rahtz Smith

**Major Field:** History

**Title of Dissertation:** "Goodbye, Mamma. I'm Off to Yokohama":  
The Office of War Information and Tin  
Pan Alley in World War II

**Approved:**

  
Major Professor and Chairman

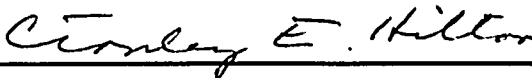
  
Dean of the Graduate School

**EXAMINING COMMITTEE:**









**Date of Examination:**

March 29, 1996